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OPERA AND THE MODERN CULTURE OF FILM: THE GENESIS OF CINEMOPERA, ITS INTERTEXTUALITY AND EXPANSION OF OPERATIC SOURCE MATERIAL

Yuell "Chuck" E. Chandler IV
University of Kentucky, tenorchuck@yahoo.com

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Yuell "Chuck" E. Chandler IV, Student

Dr. Everett McCorvey, Major Professor

Dr. Lance Brunner, Director of Graduate Studies

OPERA AND THE MODERN CULTURE OF FILM: THE GENESIS OF
CINEMOPERA, ITS INTERTEXTUALITY AND EXPANSION OF OPERATIC
SOURCE MATERIAL

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in the
College of Fine Arts
at the University of Kentucky

By
Yuell “Chuck” E. Chandler, IV

Rome, Georgia

Director: Dr. Everett McCorvey, Professor of Voice, Director of Opera, Lexington Opera
Society Endowed Chair in Opera Studies

Lexington, Kentucky

2012

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

OPERA AND THE MODERN CULTURE OF FILM: THE GENESIS OF CINEMOPERA, ITS INTERTEXTUALITY AND EXPANSION OF OPERATIC SOURCE MATERIAL

The boundaries of opera, as in all art forms, are constantly being re-evaluated. This analysis examines one of the most recent developments in opera-the use of film as source material, and connections to the film world- through analyzing three operas: Austrian composer, Olga Neuwirth's opera, *Lost Highway*, Chinese-American composer, Tan Dun's opera, *The First Emperor*, and acclaimed American film composer, Rachel Portman's opera, *The Little Prince*. Each of these works exemplifies the modern relationship of opera and film in different ways. To classify these newly film-influenced works, the term cinemopera is used in describing operas connected to or influenced by film.

Analytical techniques and historical perspectives, as well as revealing how these three operas are associated with the film world through their composers, source materials, and styles are the tools utilized to establish the characteristics of cinemopera as an operatic subcategory. Also, a definition and discussion of intertextuality in these operas reveals not only their cinematic features, but their ties to common practices in music history. *Lost Highway* is one of the most intertextual works containing sound effects, electronic music, and drawing heavily upon the David Lynch film of the same name as its source material. *The First Emperor* is an interesting study in modern ethnomusicology and contains many links to film in its source material as well. *The Little Prince* has a different kind of intertextuality than the preceding two operas because its source material is a French children's book. However, since its composer, Rachel Portman, is a very distinguished film composer, it represents many elements of style commonly found in cinemopera.

Finally, opera as a business is changing due to its convergence with film. The visual aspect of opera productions is of increasing importance, as is a singer's credibility in the role they are portraying. Singers must look their parts much

more so now than even two decades ago. As cinemopera is explored herein and its effects on the business are discussed, so are the elements of style which clearly serve to classify an opera as cinemopera.

KEYWORDS: Little Prince, Lost Highway, First Emperor, cinemopera, intertextuality

Yuell E. Chandler, IV

17 January, 2012

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By

Yuell “Chuck Edward Chandler, IV

Dr. Everett McCorvey
Director of Dissertation

Dr. Lance Brunner
Director of Graduate Studies

17 January, 2012
Date

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PART 1

CHAPTER 1: Introduction:

The history of opera offers insight into many things, not the least of which is revealed upon consideration of both the source material on which an opera is based, and the artistic team comprised of composer, librettist, director, producer, performers, and the many others involved in seeing an opera from genesis through premiere. Exploring the two primary elements (source material and original artistic team) in opera can teach us not only about the popular and “classical” cultures of the time, but how these two polarities relate to one another; more specifically, they reveal how the popular and “classical” dichotomy in a given culture interact, even if begrudgingly so. Before going further in introducing this topic, let us specify what is considered popular and classical for the purposes of this document, then examine through several different twenty-first-century operas how these two polarities relate most currently in opera.

In the at-large music world, the term classical encompasses many genres and styles, and can have a broad stylistic meaning or a narrow one. In the broad context, the term classical categorizes the antithetical style of popular music without regard to such specific musical parameters as harmonic language, form, and date of composition which lead musicologists to further classify and divide Western Classical music. As a general aesthetic label, the term classical is often traced back to the ancient Greek ideals of beauty in art, music, and philosophy, and the natural extensions of those ideals through

history.¹ In a much more specific sense, Classical refers to music derived from the Western tradition composed roughly between the years 1750-1830 which is strictly hierarchical in regards to harmony, form, and emotion; and, because it is quite specific in the date of composition to which it refers, Classical music is a subset of the classical idiom. Contextually, we shall consider the term classical in the very broad sense as referring to the style of music opposite popular music. In this regard, classical refers to one extreme artistic polarity in western history which is rooted in ancient Greek ideals, and is not restricted to any specific time period or musical parameters other than its antithetical relationship to popular music.

Conversely, popular will refer to mainstream music, art, and cultural icons opposite the broad, Greek meaning of classical. Popular in the context of this document is any music, art, or media created for consumption by large numbers of the population rather than the elite at whom most classical idioms are aimed. Thus, popular is also used in the broad sense of being created for the masses regardless of date of composition or creation, specific aesthetic qualities, and the elements comprising the work. We can conceive of popular as those works produced commercially for the masses. Typically, their production for the masses also creates a statistical likelihood that more people than not in a given target audience find the work appealing on some general level. To be clear this document uses the terms classical and popular in broad terms and as opposite polarities to each other.

¹ Douglas Seaton. *Ideas and Styles in the Western Musical Tradition*. pp. 1-2.

Regardless of artistic stature, no work of art exists without relationship to what came before it as well as the various types of art and cultural and political trends simultaneously birthed. Even the most innovative compositions would not have been possible were it not for the art, music, literature, and politics that came before and during their creation. This reference and relationship to current events, historical information, or other art, literature or music is called intertextuality- a concept whose specific manifestation in modern opera has led to the emergence of a subdivision of the operatic genre called “cinemopera” which is examined herein. Of the recent emergence of the principle of intertextuality, and by way of explanation, Graham Allen writes:

The idea that when we read a work of literature we are seeking to find a meaning which lies inside that work seems completely commonsensical... We call the process of extracting meaning from texts reading or interpretation. Despite their apparent obviousness, such ideas have been radically challenged in contemporary literature and cultural theory... Texts, whether they be literary or non-literary, are viewed by modern theorists as lacking any kind of independent meaning. They are what theorists now call intertextual. The act of reading, theorists claim, plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations... Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates... The text becomes intertext.²

² Graham Allen. *Intertextuality*. From the Introduction to his work, Allen explains both the definition and function of intertextuality in any text, where a text can be, as he states, literary or non-literary. The term

Note that Allen warns against defining intertextuality in spite of his discussion of its parameters. Though he does not specify what is and is not considered text by cultural theorists, he does indicate that it can be non-literary, and enumerates “other art forms” and “culture” in his discussion of intertextuality. To consider a musical score “text” in the cultural theory sense of the word is therefore no stretch. In combination with the aforementioned considerations of source material, composer and librettist, and how the classical and popular styles relate, we shall also consider how intertextuality in twenty-first-century opera has led to a modern subset of opera called “cinemopera.” This term simply refers to operas which share significant affiliation with film either *via* their composer, original producer, or source material. Moreover, certain operas can be considered cinemopera either due directly to intertextuality with film, in the case of operas based on film, or to one or more of the members of their maiden creative team, most often the composer, having strong ties to the film music industry as those ties significantly affect productions and scores. The emergence of cinemopera is a direct result of intertextuality; and, in this document, we will see that cinemopera results from a specific kind of intertextual relationship between film and opera.

To set precedent for the classical and popular bent of vocal music in particular, as well as its intertextuality, let us briefly examine some historically significant trends that

non-literary affords flexibility in that a work of art or musical composition can, for the purposes of this intertextual concept, be non-literary texts to which others can refer. Allen also cautions against the liberal use (or misuse) of this term as synonymous with Postmodern or historical. He further explains that conjuring a definition of the term would be a futile exercise. Allen’s use of the term intertextuality is both specific and limited in that it addresses how works of art, literature, history, and popular culture relate and create deeper levels of meaning, but not the specifics of those relationships. Simply stated, intertextuality deals with networks of meaning rather than how the elements in those networks relate.

uncover these principles at work. Throughout time, collaborations between contemporary artists, poets, dramatists, and composers have colored all different genres. In the case of French *mélodies* of the nineteenth century, visual art, poetry, and music all heavily influenced each other. Weekly gatherings of artistic figures such as composers Gabriel Fauré, Claude Debussy, Ernest Chausson, the Parnassian and Symbolist poets of the mid to late nineteenth century: Théophile Gautier, Stephan Mallarmé, Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbeaud, and Paul Verlaine, as well as painters such as Paul Gaugin, and Henri Matisse whose careers saw the movement from French impressionism to the more avant-garde Cubism championed by Picasso,³ show direct influence of these artists on one another. These meetings of artistic powerhouses (albeit each gathering may not have seen the exact same people) all incorporated a communal sharing of current art, poetry, and music- all of which contained elements of or reference to work in the same genre prior to their current work as well as traces of popular culture.⁴ These artists would assemble to discuss their work, lives, and current events, and how those current events affected their artistic output.⁵ Further, the socio-political climate of the time in which artists live and work serves to shape their communities and artistic output by way of censorship when applicable, and, of course, the direct influence and involvement art often has with its surrounding politics. Gautier in particular proved influential in this era of French literature and *mélodies* with his philosophy of *l'art pour l'art* or “art for art’s sake.” Both art and music during this time and through the ages reveal a staunch sense of intertextuality; but, to exemplify this concept through specific examples, we shall further

³ Maurice Souriau. *Histoire du Parnasse*. pp.274.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

limit our enumerations to musical ones from the operatic tradition in this document which point towards the current trend of cinemopera.

As a first example of intertextuality in opera as well as its links to the socio-political climate in which it was composed, early English stage music in the form of masques and semi operas was often conceived with a layer of meaning relating to contemporary politics. Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* is an allegorical reference to the ascension of William and Mary to the English throne in February of 1689 brought about by the "Glorious Revolution" also called the "bloodless revolution".⁶ Another piece from the same period, John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, has two title characters which are prominent figures in Greek mythology- a clear example of intertextuality. This same intertextual reference to Venus and Adonis was taken up much later by Igor Stravinsky in his 1951 opera, *The Rake's Progress*.⁷ The bedlam scene near the end of the opera holds Tom Rakewell referring to himself as Adonis, and to his beloved Ann Truelove as Venus. In this example, Stravinsky's intertextuality not only conjures the network of intertext from Greek mythology, but also association with John Blow's opera and all of the other intertextual references to these mythological characters including the poems by Shakespeare and Henry Constable. Further, the same intertextual reference is asserted later by Hans Werner Henze in his opera, *Venus und Adonis*. While Henze's opera is an obvious intertextual reference to the original Greek mythology of Venus and Adonis, the libretto is based on the Shakespeare play⁸ which doubles the degree of intertextuality at

⁶ John Buttrey. Dating Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. pp. 51-62.

⁷ The Metropolitan Opera. International Radio Broadcast Information Center. (Accessed 3 June 2010), <<http://archive.operainfo.org>>

⁸ Anne Midgette. "Henze: Venus and Adonis. (Bavarian State Opera, Munich, Germany).

work in this modern opera. As the degree of intertextuality increases, the networks of resulting meaning grow proportionally.

Mozart's body of operatic literature dominates decades of the 18th century with such works as *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Die Zauberflöte*, where each of these pieces incorporates elements of social and political satire. "*Le nozze di Figaro* was seen as an act of political diversion even in its own time, and there is an obvious sense in which Mozart, too, with his wonderfully vivid characterization of figures caught in class conflict, aligns himself with Beaumarchais' criticism of the *ancien régime*." ⁹ The final victory in the plot of *Le nozze di Figaro* is given to servants who prove themselves both wiser and more clever than the higher social class characters including the Count whose wavering fidelity to the Countess is revealed by the servant class characters, Figaro and Susanna. Though the libretto for *Le nozze di Figaro* belongs to Lorenzo DaPonte, as stated previously by Kerman, it is Mozart's hand which enhances the class conflict. ¹⁰ We find a similar social principal expanded upon in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. With a libretto by Emanuel Schickeladee, the message of *Die Zauberflöte* is that wisdom, truth, and enlightenment can come to a Prince like Tamino as well as the lowly bird catcher, Papageno— a message of equality regardless of social station. The Queen of the Night is uncovered as a negative influence, and the Priest Sarastro is held as a positive figure throughout. Each of these realizations comes as a direct result of Mozart's hand in the creation of *Die Zauberflöte*. According to Kerman, the basic plot of this opera took a change in direction after Tamino rescues Pamina: Kerman states, "I should think that this

⁹ Joseph Kerman. *Opera as Drama*. pp. 90.

¹⁰ Ibid.

change can be explained very simply and very happily on the assumption that Mozart himself insisted on it, and thereafter strictly supervised the libretto.”¹¹ Given this information about Mozart’s operas, two things are clear: first, that there is a strong sociopolitical message in his work; and second, that the message was one that Mozart himself desired to communicate. For, though the librettists are different for both operas, an element of their message- the one Mozart chose to highlight- is the same: equity between people does not relate to social or political class, nor does higher rank indicate higher moral character. In these ways, Mozart’s operatic repertoire points to a concrete relationship between classical music and the socio-economics of popular culture which is a kind of intertextuality drawing together the networks of meaning from politics, socio-economics, and, of course, opera.

Further, another great preponderance of operatic repertoire serving as entertainment and including a relationship to its modern culture is found in French Grande Opera. Many of the works falling under this distinction incorporate elements of religious persecution, oppressive political leadership, and social extravagance all of which can directly be linked to the current events of the time in which French Grande Opera thrived as a form of popular entertainment. The source materials for many of these works which incorporate or comment on popular culture and current events is the written word, and their content is widely accepted to be subtle, artistic, and in many cases liberal criticism of social and political issues of the day. Fromental Halévy’s French Grande Opera, *La Juive*, is widely considered the pinnacle of the genre. Its plot involves forbidden love between a Christian man and a Jewish woman (the title character). A

¹¹ Joseph Kerman. *Opera as Drama*. pp. 104.

pressing social issue in Halévy's time, religious tolerance is also prominently figured into Giacomo Mayerbeer's, *Les Huguenots* which premiered in 1834, only a year before *La Juive*. Further, via common theme as intertextuality, the 1819 novel, *Ivanhoe*, by Sir Walter Scott addresses the same idea of acceptance and came prior to Halévy's opera which premiered in 1835.¹² Thus, *Les Huguenots* and *La Juive* share a sense, even if vague, with *Ivanhoe* which is certainly enough to be called a kind of cross medium intertextuality where a non-literary text refers to a literary one.

Moving forward in time, Giuseppe Verdi's iconic political and cultural stature in Italy was directly attained with the inclusion of modern politics, and social and religious issues in works such as *Nabucco*, *I Lombardi alla crociata*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, and of course his *Missa de Requiem* during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which helped fuel the sacred revivalism movement.¹³ These works all share elements that strongly resonated with their contemporary audiences in political and social arenas due, at least in part, to their source material and its links to popular culture, history, and politics. Further, Richard Wagner, perhaps one of the most politically charged operatic composers in history, is another example of how the popular and classical cultures mingle. His works show clear leanings towards anti-Semitism and were used as Nazi propaganda during Hitler's campaign of genocide against the Jews prior to and during World War II. Incidentally, many of his operas also present a clear example of intertextuality through their myriad incorporation of mythology.

¹² Hallman, Diana. *Opera, Liberalism, and Antisemitism in Nineteenth-Century France*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002. pp. 165-218.

¹³ Basini, Laura. "Verdi and Sacred Revivalism in Post-Unification Italy." *19th Century Music*, Vol. 28, No. 2. (Fall 2004). pp. 133-159.

In the twentieth century Western operatic climate, source material becomes much more varied to include such high art as the texts of W. H. Auden, ideals of morality plays, and paintings of Hogarth as in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*¹⁴, global politics like *Nixon in China*, *Doctor Atomic*, and *The Death of Klinghoffer* written by John Adams, and children's media through the Rachel Portman opera discussed herein, *The Little Prince*, which is based on a French children's book. Hogarth's paintings and *Le Petit Prince*, the children's novel on which Rachel Portman's opera is based, are very different ends of the artistic spectrum, yet they both come from their respective contemporary artistic, cultural, or political environments, and have both influenced modern opera. In tracing this connection between opera and the modern popular climate from which it comes, it becomes important to recognize the beginnings of a new trend in Western opera which began in the late twentieth century—the connection between film and opera specifically addressed herein.

The source material for much of the aforementioned operatic repertoire which incorporates popular culture and current events is mostly plays such as the Beaumarchais play upon which *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Il Barbieri di Siviglia* is based, Shakespeare's *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry IV*, *Macbeth*, and numerous other texts by other playwrights. The content of these plays is widely accepted to be high art, and in many cases infused with their contemporary social and political issues. Then, during the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, a particularly noteworthy

¹⁴ George Martin. *Twentieth Century Opera: A Guide*. pp. 294.

shift occurs in source material for opera. The model of written text in the form of plays, novels, and poetry being adapted into operas shifts to include more technologically oriented source material, specifically twentieth and twenty-first century entertainment and film. Historically, operas emerge from poets, playwrights, and writers in general as librettists with the occasional composer trying his hand as librettist as well. In most of these traditional librettist/composer teams, the written word is the slate which affords the genesis of an opera. However, as the written word for entertainment has been somewhat supplanted in modern culture, or at least supplemented by the media formats of radio, television, and movies (the spoken word), some operatic source material, in keeping with the trend of opera's contemporary links to popular culture, has accordingly changed with it.

Operas such as Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*, Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, and Olga Neuwirth's *Lost Highway* reveal specific and direct influences of this paradigm shift from the written word as operatic source material to film as such with the minor exception of *The Little Prince* which is based upon the French children's book *Le Petite Prince*, and which does maintain a concrete link to the film world through its composer, Rachel Portman. Each of these works show a slightly different, but specifically modern relationship of opera to the film world. The commonalities between them include but are not limited to their date of composition, all being early twenty-first-century works composed in a time when film's prominence is obvious and prevalent in modern culture, their incorporation of or relationship to film as either source material or creative production process, and their reflection and incorporation of some historical,

social, political, or cultural icons. It is the purpose of this document, through analysis, to examine and link Olga Neuwirth's *Lost Highway*, Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*, and Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince* to the modern intertextual relationship of film and opera. This intertextual relationship arises from the paradigm shift of source material to film, and leads to the distinct subcategory of cinemopera. Note that classifying an opera as cinemopera may also emerge through stylistic elements relating to film, which we find most often in operas written by prominent film composers regardless of any links (or lack thereof) to film in the source material.

CHAPTER 2: Olga Neuwirth's Lost Highway: Thoroughly Modern Opera

Olga Neuwirth was born in Graz, Austria in 1968 and began studying music between the ages of six and seven with trumpet lessons.¹⁵ She studied composition formally in Vienna and at the San Francisco Conservatory, and studied painting and film making at Art College. Neuwirth continued to study in Paris working at IRCAM prior to her professional breakthrough in 1999 for the work *Bählamm's Fest* for which she won the Ernst Krenek prize.¹⁶ Currently, Neuwirth resides in Vienna, Austria and continues in her creative endeavors with much recognition. Aside from her studies, Neuwirth's career has involved film in several ways. First, she is a film maker. Neuwirth is credited with the idea for three films for which she has also written the scores: *Miramondo Multiplo* (2006/7), *Disenchanted Time* (2005), and *No More Secrets, No More Lies* (2005).¹⁷ In addition, she has collaborated on a number of films in several capacities, most of which involve composing the scores: *The Long Rain* (2000), *Cannon of Funny Phases* (1992), *Symphonie Diagonal* (2006), and *The Calligrapher* (1991).¹⁸ Further, Neuwirth has written and produced her own film, *Durch Luft und das Meer* (2007) which is approximately a half hour in length and pairs footage of sky and sea together with Neuwirth's own music.¹⁹ Of interesting note is her film *Cannon of Funny Phases* which was co-authored by Neuwirth's daughter, Flora Neuwirth. The film is based on a short story by Leonora Carrington and is a canon (in the musical sense) of shapes changing.

¹⁵ Here, conflicting information exists. The only recording of *Lost Highway* contains liner notes which indicate Neuwirth began study at seven. Information surrounding the American premiere of *Lost Highway* indicates that she began study at six. These two sources are: Recording- Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. and the website from the American premiere- Oberlin Conservatory of Music. (Accessed 21 July, 2010).: <<http://www.oberlin.edu/con/bkstage/LH/LostH.html>>

¹⁶ Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. Liner notes. pp. 49.

¹⁷ *Music for Films*. DVD. Vienna, Austria: Kairos, 2008.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

The first image begins morphing when another image appears and goes through the same changes as the first— like a rhythmic canon using images rather than pitches. As multiple entrances of the image occur at predetermined intervals, we discover that it speeds up towards the end of the film and cadences making this visual canon based on the idea of a mensuration canon. Where a prolation canon reveals entrances of the theme occurring at different speeds, the mensuration canon specifically increases in pace which is what we see at work in *Canon of Funny Phases*. Further, the first statement of the visual canon is accompanied by a musical statement. Upon examination, we discover the film is also a musical canon which matches the visual exactly. Though the film is just under eight minutes long, it is a shining example of Wagner’s idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in that it involves visual art, film, musical terminology and application (canon), and music in the score for the film written by Olga Neuwirth. Though the intertext of *Canon of Funny Phases* is not our specific purpose, it gives insight into Neuwirth’s approach to her opera, *Lost Highway*.

First, to prepare for understanding the adaptive process and how connected to film the opera, *Lost Highway*, truly is, we must understand the difficult nature, psychology, and meaning of the David Lynch film. Lynch began the idea for this film based on the two-word phrase which became the title, “lost highway.” Having read this phrase in the Barry Gifford book, *Night People*, Lynch writes:

I love those two words together. We should make something called Lost Highway. The phrase had a lot of potential for me. The unknown was

suddenly pulling me in and I was ready to go into another world. It became about mood and those kinds of things that can only happen at night. It held promise and intrigue and mystery.²⁰

Lynch took Gifford's phrase as the title of the project, and teamed up with him to write the script for the film version of *Lost Highway*. The deeply psychological and, frankly, confusing, nature of this film lies at the center of Lynch's work. The obscure, a dark psychology, and the questions of identity and reality versus fantasy are frequently explored in Lynch's work making *Lost Highway* quite paradigmatic in that it explores these ideas unabashedly.

The film follows the psychology of a man, Fred, surrounding one simple event: the murder (be it imagined or real— we do not know) of his wife, Renee. *Lost Highway* is framed by two important scenes which explore the physical nature of relationships and represent the failure of a relationship.²¹ From the beginning of the film, we learn that Fred and Renee are not in a particularly good marriage. Fred suspects Renee of infidelity and feels emasculated by this. The first sex scene reveals a cold relationship with an impotent Fred whose lack of performance is patronizingly comforted by his distant wife, Renee. Here, Lynch presents the problem in their relationship as being internal in that the sexual aspect of their partnership simply does not work.²² This dysfunction represents a kind of failure. In an attempt to correct this internal problem, Fred either imagines or actually commits murder. We discover that Renee has been murdered in the final receipt

²⁰ Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. Liner notes pp. 29.

²¹ Ibid. Slavov Zizek's contribution to the liner notes. pp. 24-28.

²² Ibid. pp. 24-28.

of a string of anonymous video tapes which mysteriously appear at Fred and Renee's house and cause alarm. This discovery begins a psychological transformation, the complex details of which blur truth, reality, and identity in typical David Lynch style.

It is theorized by Slavov Zizek that from this point (or possibly beginning just prior to the murder) until the end of the film represents Fred's imaginary solution to the issues in Fred and Renee's marriage. Nonetheless, Fred is convicted of murder and sentenced to jail. The first major identity pivot in the movie happens while Fred is imprisoned. Complaining of severe headaches and insomnia, Fred sees a doctor who prescribes a sleeping pill. The first night using the prescription proves mysterious as the prison guard discovers the next morning that the man in Fred's cell is no longer Fred. With no explanation, in what seems to be an impossible event, Fred is no longer in his cell and a young, virile mechanic named Pete is. Naturally, Pete is released as he is not the murderer who was supposed to be incarcerated. With no means of escape, we are left to conclude that somehow, Pete is Fred. Lynch explains this transformation using a condition called psychogenic fugue in which a person imagines and assumes a completely different identity when under extreme duress or trauma.²³ With Pete's freedom he returns to his job as a mechanic to discover a particular client, Mr. Eddy, has been asking for him. When Mr. Eddy arrives at the garage, we (and Pete) learn that he has anger management issues and is compulsive about maintaining order and following rules. When Mr. Eddy is tailgated by a driver and given the middle finger upon passing, he crashes the driver's car, pistol whips him with his two thugs holding him at gunpoint, and insists that he obtain a driver's manual and learn the rules for following too closely.

²³ Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. Liner Notes. pp. 29.

Aside from the dual comic and disturbing nature of this scene, its significance is that it reveals the father figure in the psychogenic fugue world, Mr. Eddy, as an inherently bad man. We come to understand the significance of this revelation later once we meet Alice in the very next scene—portrayed by Patricia Arquette who also plays the role of Renee in the Lynch film. Though her hair color and some of the details of her physical appearance have slightly changed, it is clear that Alice is Renee. Alice is Fred's projection of Renee in his imagined alter identity.²⁴ The leggy blonde bombshell (and *femme fatale*), Alice, comes to the garage first with Mr. Eddy, clearly as his significant other. When she returns to the garage, she does so alone and for the sole purpose of beginning an affair with Pete. The affair begins that night, and plans to eliminate Mr. Eddy are drawn up, since he is both dangerous and the external obstacle to the Alice/Pete relationship. Zizek submits that Mr. Eddy is the manifestation of the internal problems between Fred and Renee in the imaginary world of Pete and Alice.²⁵ This assertion seems logical as one of Mr. Eddy's most memorable lines is when he asks Pete if he likes pornos which introduces a sexual element serving to associate the external manifestation of the problem in the Pete/Alice relationship (Mr. Eddy) with the internal problem (impotence) in the Fred/Renee relationship. Since the Fred/Renee problems are internal and sexual, their manifestation in the imaginary world becomes external so that Pete (Fred's psychogenic fugue identity) can deal with the problem in a tangible way. Another murder ensues and we feel that, with all obstacles removed, Pete and Alice may be able to find their happy ending. Alternatively, due to the preponderance of violence and tribulation required to get

²⁴ Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. Zizek's contribution to the liner notes. pp. 29.

²⁵ Ibid. pp. 29-30.

Pete and Alice to this point in their relationship, we may feel that they are doomed regardless.

Indeed the final sequence of *Lost Highway* brings the second important sex scene which frames the story. Here, Pete and Alice are finally together in making their escape from the murder they committed. Then in a bizarre twist Alice whispers in Pete's ear, "You'll never have me,"²⁶ ceases to make love to Pete, and disappears into a house in the desert. This climactic representation of failure brings about the final change of identity in which Pete returns to the identity of Fred. He is driving down what we must perceive as the "lost highway" to which the title refers being chased by the police when he dramatically morphs back into his original identity of Fred. It seems that in both Fred's real world and in the psychogenic fugue world of Pete, the relationship is destined to fail.

While questions about what is real and what is not remain at the end of the film, there are certainties and rich levels of meaning in *Lost Highway*. It is clear that Renee and Alice are different manifestations of the same person who is Fred's wife. It is clear that Fred shifts between two different identities with different physicalities, names, and lives using the psychogenic fugue explained by David Lynch. Further, it is clear that murder represents Fred's way of dealing with the psychological dilemma plaguing his marriage, and Pete's way of trying to overcome the outward manifestation of this problem in his relationship with Alice. In Zizek's interpretation, the murder of Renee is likely imagined, whereas the murder of Mr. Eddy is (from within the context of a psychologically

²⁶ *Lost Highway*. 2 Hrs. 35 Mins. DVD. CIBY 2000/Asymmetrical Productions. Hollywood, CA: Universal Studios, 1997.

constructed, assumed identity) real, and both represent the main character's unsuccessful attempt to overcome the obstacle(s) preventing him from a good relationship with Renee/Alice. Thus, the significance of the two sex scenes is their representation of the philosophy that we are all destined for failure which is central to this film.²⁷

With a firm handle on the film version of *Lost Highway*, its meaning, and its dramatic structure, let us turn our attention to how this work is adapted into Olga Neuwirth's opera. Will its transformation be like that of Fred in the film and leave us questioning what is real, or will it be literal, complete, and provide further insight into the psychology and depths of Lynch's *Lost Highway*? Neuwirth writes about her opera:

Lost Highway is a composition that decidedly lives from the transformation of physical spaces, diverse inner and outer spaces, into sound spaces. In performance, this is achieved through various, three-dimensional sound projections, which surround the audience with playing, live-electronics, and virtual acoustics, resulting in different experiential relationships from within and without, close by, and from a distance. The illustrations of these sound spaces and notes naturally are only an attempt to approach the experience in the theater. Fortunately, the possibilities of surround-techniques have come to our aid, which envelop the listener with alternating, overlaying sound-strata. Thus, the present production was

²⁷ To be clear and forthcoming, the interpretive elements of the meaning of the sex scenes and what they represent are those of Slavoj Žižek and are found in an essay written for the liner notes of the original recording of the opera footnoted herein. The psychological information is from David Lynch himself in his contribution to the liner notes of the recording of the opera. Any other interpretive elements are my own.

intended to be mixed for 5.1 surround. The dual channel stereo version which is included in addition is only a concession to a format- at least as far as works such as *Lost Highway* are concerned- that hopefully is dying out. One could imagine the stereo version as being something like having to look at Claude Monet's Water Lilies in black and white.²⁸

In her statement, Neuwirth tells us that this opera is a theater piece designed to explore how sound can represent physical space as well as emotional space, and the transformation thereof. To that end, as her writing suggests, she incorporates sound effects in the form of digital music, computerized effects, and engineering performers' voices through a microphone and sound system which are carefully designed and coordinated with the orchestral score. Coordinating elements of electronic music with the "live" music of the orchestra and performers creates an atmosphere extending the audience's experience far beyond that of a typical opera where audience perception stops at the stage. Much like some theater productions, Neuwirth's concept for *Lost Highway* encompasses the whole space of the theater and occurs all around the audience. The inclusion of electronic sounds, music, and effects in this opera makes it quite like a theater production with heavy handed incidental music. In fact, the English National Opera production of *Lost Highway* was produced in the round to accommodate Neuwirth's concept of space. The text of the opera is mostly spoken with some specific rhythms written out at times, and in rare occasions, suggested melodic contour and still rarer written out pitches for the singers. To call this work an opera is a stretch as it

²⁸ Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. Liner Notes. pp. 3.

contains so little actual, operatic singing. However, most critics rightly label it a music theater work.

Though most of the 2006 recording cast is comprised of opera singers, many of the roles in Neuwirth's adaptation entail little to no singing. Accordingly, Vincent Crowley, an actor who trained in Sydney,²⁹ portrayed the male lead of Fred and the mechanic, Pete, in the original production. The rest of the 2006 cast was made up of singers Constance Haumann, Georg Nigl, David Moss, Andrew Watts, Kai Wessel, Gavin Webber, Grayson Millwood, Rodolfo Seas-Araya, Lucas Rössner, and Jodi Melnick, many of whom specialize in early and contemporary music. The 2003 premiere of Olga Neuwirth's opera, *Lost Highway*, took place in the composer's hometown of Graz, Austria during the Steirischer Herbst Festival of New Music in co-production with the year-long festival Graz 2003: Cultural Capital of Europe and Theater Basel.³⁰ Of the work at its premiere, reviewer, Larry L. Lash of *Financial Times* describes, "A maddeningly complex source is distilled and clarified, and, in the process, something entirely new emerges. Neuwirth's innovation comes with the psychological layers added by her wildly original sonic landscape... I am overwhelmed by its merits. *Lost Highway* entertains, challenges our perceptions of opera, and demands to be experienced."³¹ Another critic (Michael Eidenbenz of the *Tagesanzeiger*) writes on 3 November, 2003 from the premiere, "A comparison with the original is unavoidable and legitimate. The result is not free fantasy or elements and motives from the film, yet instead, a direct and

²⁹ Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. Liner Notes. pp. 54.

³⁰ Oberlin College Conservatory of Music. (Accessed 21 July, 2010),
<<http://www.oberlin.edu/con/bkstage/LH/LostH.html>>

³¹ Boosey and Hawks. (Accessed 5 January, 2011).
<<http://www.boosey.com/pages/opera/moredetails.asp?musicid=31012>>

astounding exact adaptation... Olga Neuwirth proves again that she can create congenial as well as complex emotional music using both computerized techniques and traditional orchestral sonorities.”³² Still another reviewer says of Neuwirth’s *Lost Highway*:

When [the main character] Fred, plagued with furious headaches, embarks on a mutation in his prison cell and transforms into Pete, bodily language and electronically estranged language reach an intense symbiosis that allows music theatre to find its justification and identity... The musical narrative develops incredibly rich colours around a disconcerting basic mood, a low drone, that further more reminds us of the film... an ambiguous world into which jazz elements and even sparkling disco-riffs are fused in stylized fashion. Neuwirth puts her trust in overlaid material, multiple strata, nervous agitations— reinforced through tape recordings and computer-aided distortions of sound and voice.³³

One last reviewer’s perspective on the work from a 2008 performance (not the premiere) is as follows:

Lost Highway... endeavors to recreate the surreal, lurid, raunchy world of that psychological thriller. Fusing video, dialogue and music, both live (a 27-piece ensemble...) and pre-recorded electronics, Neuwirth captures the menace lurking around every corner. The plot, weaving reality and

³² Boosey and Hawks. (Accessed 5 January, 2011).

<<http://www.boosey.com/pages/opera/moredetails.asp?musicid=31012>>

³³ Ibid. This review is by Ljubisa Tosic of *Der Standard* in a 3 November, 2003 review.

fantasy, sometimes confuses the characters as much as the audience. The condition they are suffering from is described by Lynch as a “psychogenic fugue” a state so traumatic that they assume another identity to escape.³⁴

Commonly, the operatic adaptation of *Lost Highway* has been received in a positive way. Likewise, it is perceived as pushing the boundaries of opera while being an effective music theater piece. Neuwirth’s explanations previously discussed, as well as the observations of others may give more insight into this pull away from traditional opera. To represent such deeply psychological principals as the psychogenic fugue, common practice harmony and sonata form scarcely suffice as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven existed in times when the term psychogenic fugue did not yet exist. Further, as the source material for the opera lends itself to *verismo* ideals, Neuwirth has stretched an operatic tradition to a music theater piece representative of cinemopera and containing a great deal of intertextuality.

The loosely termed “opera,” *Lost Highway*, is an example of a very strict intertextuality between film and opera in that its plot, characters, set, and libretto are all based solely on the 1997 David Lynch film by the same name. The Lynch/Gifford collaboration serves as sole source material for Neuwirth’s opera. Olga Neuwirth wrote the unusual score for this opera whose quantity of traditional operatic singing is slight at best. The work also includes electronic sound effects making this atypical opera, but what may prove to be typical cinemopera. Additionally, Olga Neuwirth co-wrote the libretto

³⁴ Boosey and Hawks. (Accessed 5 January, 2011).
<<http://www.boosey.com/pages/opera/moredetails.asp?musicid=31012>> Barry Millington of *Evening Standard* wrote this in a 7 April, 2008 review.

with Elfriede Jelinek, winner of the 2004 Nobel Prize in literature. With a screen play and finished film in hand, a representative libretto seems a simple task. However, adapting a film into an opera can be logistically problematic. Labeling Neuwirth's piece an opera may be hasty as it has much more in common with *melodrama* or *Singspiel* and certainly theater. Whether Neuwirth's sense of nationalism resulted in her modern opera reflecting the early German ideals of *Singspiel* is unclear, however, it is a clear extension of this tradition. Its basic construction is an atonal and atmospheric orchestral score, much like a tone poem, with dialogue and blocking layered on top and enhanced with sound effects which create a splendid mixture of textures. The orchestral score is atonal yet colorful and creates the intensity Lynch sets forth in his film while the vocal lines are characteristic of cinemopera in that they are adapted almost verbatim from the film. The text is strictly coordinated in time with the orchestral accompaniment, the ebb and flow of which matches both the micro level of the text and the macro level of the tone in any given scene. In some cases, instrumentalists are given indications to play a certain musical figure in a measure (which may or may not even contain specific pitches) for a set amount of time or to match specific text or action rather than the traditional approach of keeping musical time through meter and rhythm. The score example below from pp. 15, measure 67 (Figure 2.1) shows this compositional device in the saxophone which is instructed to begin playing 35 seconds after the dialogue has begun and does not specify pitches:

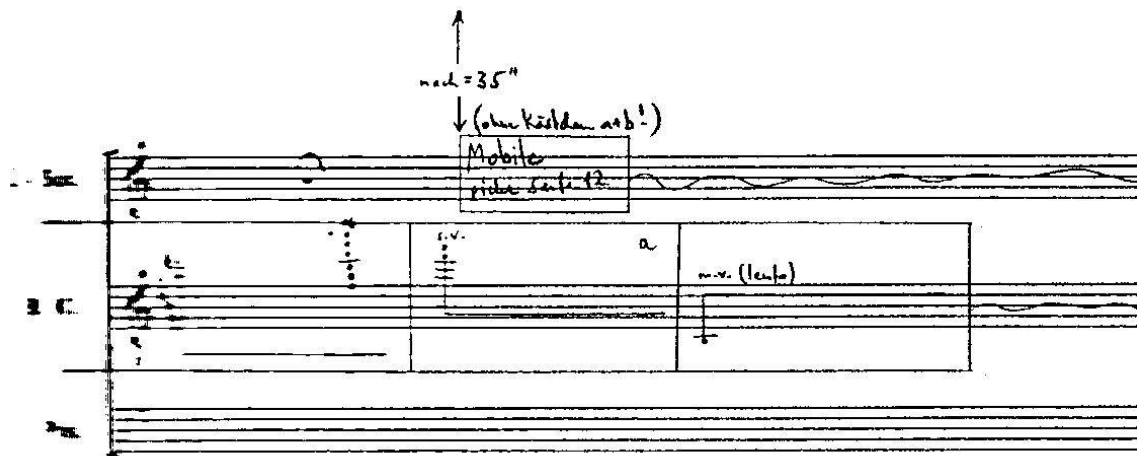


Figure 2.1 Saxophone part, pp. 15, mm. 67

Lost Highway by Olga Neuwirth and Elfriede Jelenick
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Much of the text of *Lost Highway* is written out like dialogue without musical parameters, but in some cases, rhythms, melodic contour, inflection, and pitch are specified, though often only one of these elements at a time is given to the singers. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 below are examples of the various types of dialogue in the score found in Mr. Eddy's line spanning only eight measures.

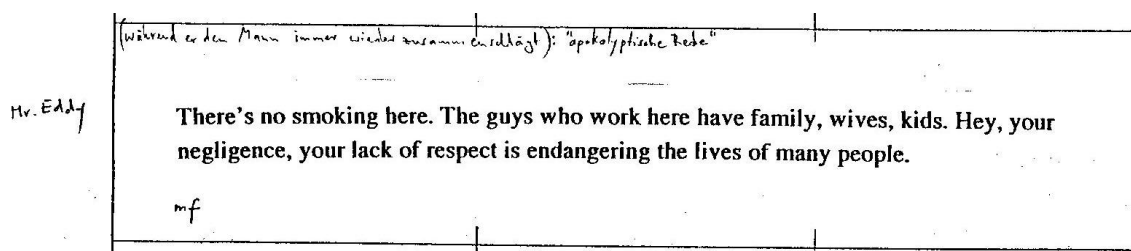


Figure 2.2 Text without rhythm

Lost Highway by Olga Neuwirth and Elfriede Jelenick
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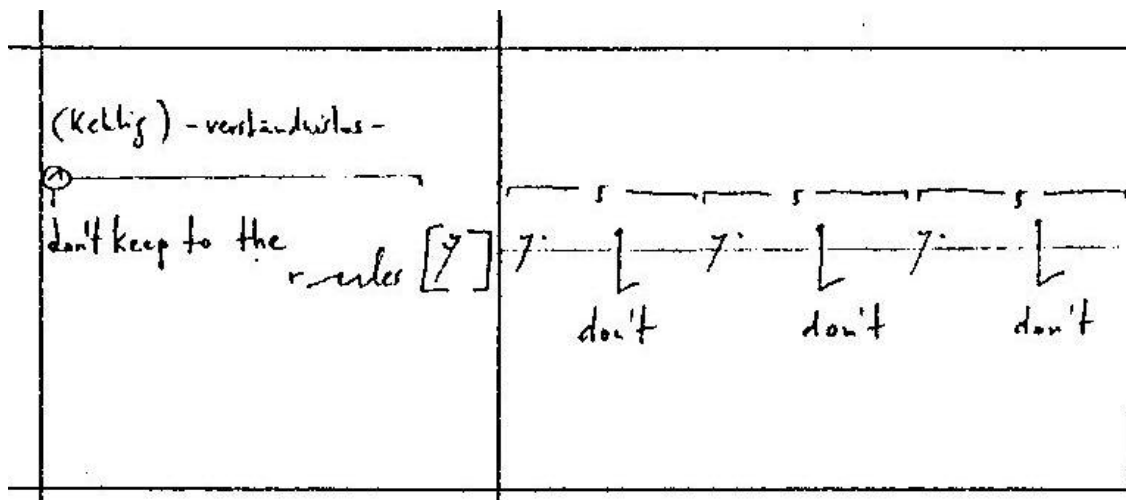


Figure 2.3 Text with rhythm

Lost Highway by Olga Neuwirth and Elfriede Jelenick
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One of the challenges of the score, therefore, from the perspective of the performers is the intricacy of the notation for the vocalists which we will examine later. Though *Lost Highway* does not contain much singing, it is incredibly complex rhythmically and contains extended techniques for singers. For example, Mr. Eddy's death aria requires the performer to make some bizarre sounds— like those a dying person may make. For these extended techniques as well as the incorporation of every-day characters like a mechanic, a jazz musician, and a housewife put under duress, the score contains an incredible element of verisimilitude paralleling film and perhaps reminiscent of *verismo* opera, but specifically for its extended techniques, is even more indicative of cinemopera.

Technology plays an important role in the opera *Lost Highway* as previously addressed by the composer herself. Upon walking into the theatre, an audience member might think he or she were going to a rock concert with a strangely clad stage. Large speakers line the performance hall for special effects and ambient sounds, which is yet another atypical feature of opera, but points towards cinemopera. Also interesting to note is the incorporation of a television screen and VCR into the set which show the important video footage during the course of the show. Whether or not Neuwirth is aware, this incorporation of working televisions is intertext in two ways; first, because it allows the footage played on the television to mingle with the action on stage enhancing the network of meaning of the television footage which creates intertext, and second, because several other productions have used television footage on stage such as Cincinnati Opera's production on John Adams' *Nixon in China*. Actual news footage of Richard Nixon on his visit to China is played on televisions incorporated into the set in this production which both increases the impact of the action on stage and adds an element of verisimilitude to the opera. Soprano, Valéry MacCarthy, who portrayed the role of Renee/Alice in the English National Opera production states:

You're surrounded by video screens, you're constantly underscored by music, and you're mic-ed up throughout the action, which means that you're often whispering. You're not even doing a standard opera voice—you're not using any vibrato and instead using tons of breathiness. There's no intermission—it's two hours all the way through. And there are even

whole scenes which take place in moving cars. All you need is someone shouting out ‘action’ and ‘cut’ and it would feel exactly like a film!³⁵

Clearly, the layers of intertextuality and the relationship between this opera and the film world are apparent both to the cast and crew, as well as to the audience. The question remains, how was this opera conceived, and how did it make its transformation from film to opera?

Lost Highway begins with the simple inscription, “Auf dem Lost Highway durch eine ‘nuit sans fin,’ wo Zeit zum Raum wird, wo alles endet und alles anfängt...” which translates: On the Lost Highway, a “night without end” where time becomes space, where everything ends and everything begins... Just thereafter Neuwirth places a quotation of Paul Valery, “la création poétique, c’est la création de l’attente.” This quotation, though connected to *Lost Highway* in a general artistic sense, is, more specifically, an example of intertextuality. The allusion to the French writer Valery comes not from Lynch, but rather is an association the composer makes to communicate that poetic creation is the creation of patience. That *Lost Highway* requires audio equipment for special effects makes it even more intertextual and typical of cinemopera as it gives the audience an association with a popular concert rather than a classical one. Moreover, the scrim affront the set onto which the actual image of the highway from the Lynch film is projected at both the beginning and the end magnifies the amount of intertext present.

³⁵ The Times. (Accessed 21 July, 2010).
<http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/stage/opera/article3633891.ece>

The degree to which Neuwirth specifies so many parts of this production is reminiscent of the involvement of bel canto composers (and Wagner) in the production of their works. The composer gives a specific diagram of how the orchestra is to be assembled, (See Figure 2.4), and instructions about the technical things happening on stage including sound effects, blackouts, television footage, and the general stylistic consideration of text delivery.

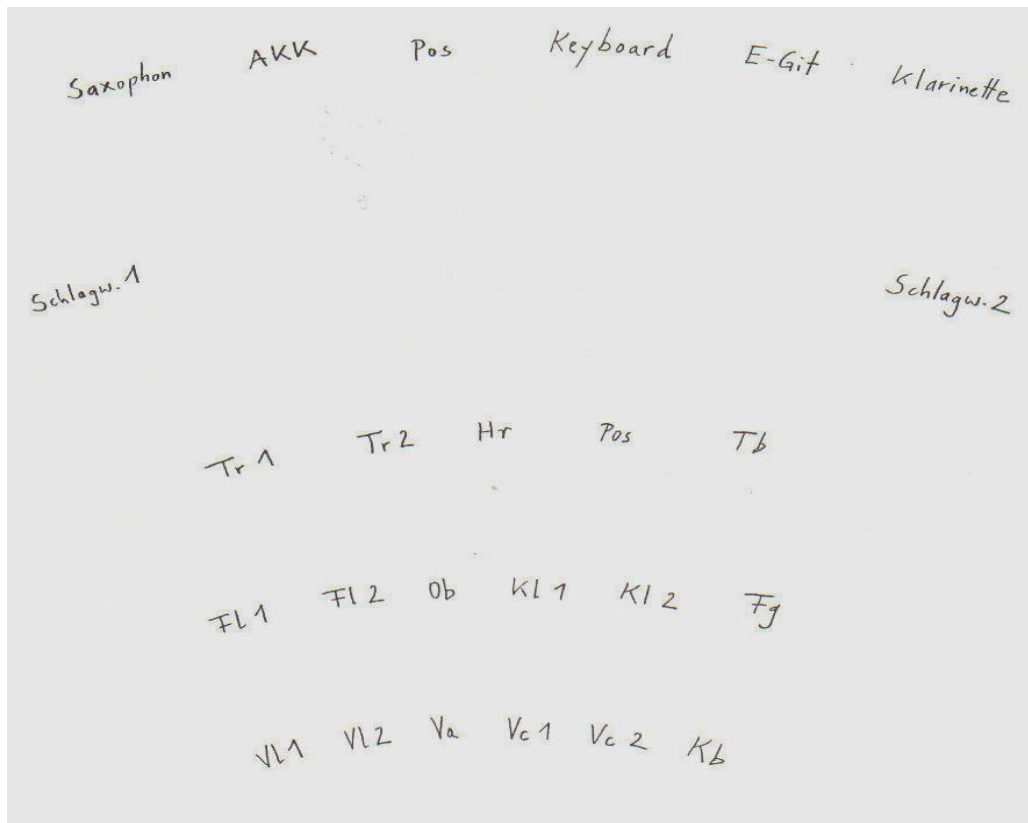


Figure 2.4 Orchestra seating chart

Lost Highway by Olga Neuwirth and Elfriede Jelenick
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As the opera opens, the audience is immediately overwhelmed with angst from the jarring, foreboding nature of the atonal orchestral score. While Lynch creates atmosphere through minimal music and sound effects, atypical of most movies but perhaps a reference to the style of Stanley Kubric and films like *Deliverance* which also commonly use little to no music, Neuwirth lacks this luxury as she transforms a film into an opera. The requirement of musical sound in opera precludes a great deal of silence, even by some avant garde standards. So, instead of uncomfortable silence brought about by a lack of music and slow paced dialogue (typical of Lynch), Neuwirth composes a richly textured, atonal score to accompany the dialogue and action. Interestingly enough, measures nine and ten are completely silent. Here, the composer has honored Lynch's tool of silence. Measure eleven is musically sparse with the solo contribution of the contra-bass playing an ascending minor ninth (C sharp - D) followed by a "resolution" to B natural in all eighth notes for only one beat of the measure. This figure is repeated on the downbeat of measure twelve, then two beats later the score returns to life with the strings and percussion filling out the previously monophonic texture.³⁶ Here the composite rhythm increases significantly to steady sixteenth notes with a few minor exceptions until the first spoken line of the opera in measure thirty-six.³⁷ The orchestra, through its atonal constitution and increase in composite rhythm, has built to the line, "Dick Laurent is dead" communicating that in addition to the obviousness of this news being bad; something else may also be the matter. The basic dramatic construction is the same as the film version with some minor changes. Of note, the changes at the beginning of the piece are some of the largest. While the film and the opera begin with exactly the

³⁶ Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. pp. 4-5. mm. 9-14.

³⁷ Ibid. A voice is heard over the intercom telling Fred, "Dick Laurent is dead." Incidentally, this is exactly the same as the first line of the film version. Here the libretto is unchanged.

same first line, they quickly diverge. We learn of the troubled relationship between Fred and his wife, Renee, in both versions; however, due to the constraints of the stage Neuwirth has creatively combined the dialogue before the nightclub scene, the nightclub scene and telephone call therein, and the following scene after Fred returns from playing in the nightclub. Though inconsequential as it does not disrupt the plot, co-librettists Neuwirth and Jelineck have changed Fred's instrument from tenor sax in the Lynch film to trumpet. In the film version, Fred is shown on stage playing his tenor sax with a band. Neuwirth has worked Fred's music into the score in an effective juxtaposition of atonality, computer/electronic music, and jazz.

While Lynch takes advantage of the capabilities of film by creating drastic and abrupt scene changes like the one between the painfully quiet opening dialogue and the boisterous jazz club, Neuwirth cannot create shock-effect in the same manner. Whereas her visual palate is limited to real time action, her sonic palate is largely unrestricted. The technology incorporated by the composer serves as a suitable substitute for what Lynch does with film, mostly achieving the same kind of impact. For example, the scene transition to the jazz club in the film is, as previously described, abrupt and drastic. Neuwirth moves from a nearly silent, soft-spoken and slow paced dialogue to a rip-roaring and intense jazz number immediately to preserve the aesthetic of the original source material. This preservation yields strength to classifying Neuwirth's *Lost Highway* as cinemopera.

As the opera moves forward, it closely follows the dramatic structure of the film with much of the dialogue taken verbatim. Fred describes his dream to Renee using the exact same text as in the film representing no departure from the source material. In maintaining the text from the film to the libretto for this scene, Neuwirth and Jelinek have preserved the significance of it. As Fred describes his dream, it is the first moment in the film (and opera), when the identity of Renee is brought into question. Fred describes his dream in both the film and opera, “You were in the house... calling my name... but I couldn’t find you. Then there you were... lying in bed... but it wasn’t you... It looked like you... but it wasn’t.”³⁸ The next main event, the reception of the second anonymous video tape, is also preserved and leads to the detectives coming to Fred and Renee’s house. Though the events and dialogue are largely the same between the film and the opera, there is one minor change. When Renee calls the police and gives their address in the film she describes it as being “near the observatory”³⁹ whereas in the opera, Fred calls and only gives the address with no other descriptors. This departure from the film is quite minor and has little implication, but may be interesting to note. Lynch’s style maximizes meaning through language much like a poet. Thus, there is little to no superfluous language in his films. The phrase, living “near the observatory” in the Lynch film likely serves to suggest the proximity of a third party observer made explicit by the video tapes they receive, and implicit in the character Fred soon meets, Mystery Man. Again, that Neuwirth and Jelinek have chosen to omit this descriptor is of little consequence, but perhaps dilutes the poetic efficiency and texture of Lynch’s screenplay.

³⁸ Olga Neuwirth. . *Lost Highway*. Revised version- September 2006. Mainz, Germany: Boosey & Hawkes, 2006. Also: *Lost Highway*. 2 Hrs. 35 Mins. DVD. CIBY 2000/Asymmetrical Productions. Hollywood, CA: Universal Studios, 1997.

³⁹ *Lost Highway*. 2 Hrs. 35 Mins. DVD. CIBY 2000/Asymmetrical Productions. Hollywood, CA: Universal Studios, 1997.

What little may be lost from the omission of the phrase, “near the observatory” is corrected by Neuwirth’s use of special effects during the detectives’ home visit. When the detectives ask if the couple owns a video camera, Renee replies no with the explanation that, “Fred hates them.”⁴⁰ The effects employed by Neuwirth for Fred’s response to this enhance the meaning and are paired with the aleatory elements of this work. In the orchestral score, many times throughout the opera, Neuwirth indicates for the players to continue playing in a loosely suggested manner until they hear a particular line, or until a specific event on stage occurs. Here, Neuwirth stops the strings immediately when they hear Renee say, “Fred hates them.” A salient feature of the opera, *Lost Highway*, the electronic music is pre-recorded, and programmed in a way such that it is run off of cues, much like lighting for a production. With human control over this element, the aleatory nature of the piece can be effectively layered into the already established, non-aleatory musical elements of the score. The composer, realizing the significance of Fred’s explanation that he likes to remember things his way rather than the way they actually happened, runs Fred’s voice through a distortion filter and a loop. By so doing, Neuwirth has fleshed out the significance of this text in providing insight into Fred’s psychology. Fred’s response that he likes to remember things, “not necessarily the way they happened”⁴¹ is one of the earliest indications to the audience that Fred’s perception of things may be altered. That the composer highlights the use of

⁴⁰ Olga Neuwirth. . *Lost Highway*. Revised version- September 2006. Mainz, Germany: Boosey & Hawkes, 2006. pp.18 mm. 83. The composer gives the melodic indication in the strings of a continuous, wavy line. Their cut off is marked with a solid, vertical line and specifies “bis ‘Fred hates them.’” The strings stop playing at this spoken line, and their wavy line stops with the solid, vertical line.

⁴¹ Olga Neuwirth. . *Lost Highway*. Revised version- September 2006. Mainz, Germany: Boosey & Hawkes, 2006. Also: *Lost Highway*. 2 Hrs. 35 Mins. DVD. CIBY 2000/Asymmetrical Productions. Hollywood, CA: Universal Studios, 1997.

electronic effect for the purpose of foreshadowing is yet another compositional device making *Lost Highway* cinemopera.

The sound effects Neuwirth indicates for voices require each performer to be on a microphone. In some cases, amplification of this sort is used to aid voices carrying into large spaces, which, though contrary to the voice training opera singers receive in optimizing their vocal production to an efficient sound which allows them to carry into a large hall without the help of electronic amplification, is, unfortunately, becoming more and more common. In Neuwirth's *Lost Highway* the singers' electronic amplification has little to do with their inability to project, and everything to do with the sound effects required by the composer. Several times throughout the score, Neuwirth indicates that the voice be run through a specific sound filter or other electronic means of manipulation. As this electronic manipulation happens in real time during performances, it is also an element controlled by a person and contributing to the list of aleatory features of this work. An example of voice filtering which requires microphones is found in measure 84 during Fred's line, "the way I remember them," which, as previously discussed, helps color this text, highlighting its importance and psychological implications.

Another prominent example of voice filtering in *Lost Highway* is found in measures 344-393 during which time several filters are used. These measures weigh prominently in the story telling of this opera, yet contain no text. Fred's psychogenic fugue process takes place during these measures and Pete emerges at the end. The magnitude of the discomfort of such a transformation (inward and outward) is increased

by Neuwirth's electronic enhancement of the vocal sounds she suggests for Fred during this shift in identity. The deeply psychological and disturbing nature of this event likely leads the score to be taken far beyond the limitations of tonality, musical form, and structure. Indeed, through the vocalism of Fred, and the filters Neuwirth uses to twist it, the composer achieves a haunting series of "sound space"⁴² which represents the equally morbid "inner space"⁴³ of Fred as he transforms into Pete. The first sound effect enhancing this scene is called the "Fred Effect" and happens at the beginning of the transformation in measure 345. The effect is used in virtually every measure through the psychogenic fugue except for a few indicated without microphone. The next filter immediately following the initial "Fred Effect" is a distortion of the baritone saxophone in measure 346. This distortion could represent Fred's world (jazz) changing and also refers to the original film version of *Lost Highway* in that Fred's instrument in the film is saxophone- another intertextual reference. By extension, the inclusion of jazz elements into the score (though some may argue this is obligatory due to the source material) is another way Neuwirth creates intertext. Jazz in an opera has many networks of association, the strongest of which is Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. By expanding her sonic palate to include electronic music, sound effects, and jazz Olga Neuwirth achieves cinematic heights in communicating the drama of David Lynch's film *Lost Highway* in her opera by the same name, and offers a preponderance of insight into the emergence of cinemopera. Whether her inclusion of electronic music stems from her training at IRCAM is unknown, however, given the preponderance of electronic music coming out of Paris during the 1960's and 1970's, it is distinctly possible.

⁴² Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. Liner Notes. pp. 3. These are the composer's words describing her work.

⁴³ Ibid.

The successful adaptation of a film to an opera is furthered by effects during the party scene. Prior to Fred's arrest, he and Renee attend a party at which Fred encounters the Mystery Man. While the opera represents a fairly literal adaptation from the film both in terms of dramatic effect and dialogue, the limitations of live theater present Neuwirth with some challenges. The background music at the party (in the film version) is techno which fades in when less important dialogue occurs and fades out for more important dialogue. With an orchestra, techno could be difficult to simulate and may perhaps prove ineffective as would likely sound absurd. Further the dynamic control in relationship to the dialogue would add another challenge, but not an insurmountable one. Rather than draw her orchestra away from their tone poem-like atonal backdrop, the composer uses pre-recorded music for the party scene. The blackout in measure 97 precedes the party scene, and while the orchestra continues building dramatic intensity with thicker textures and a mostly sixteenth note composite rhythm, the set and lighting change indicating the beginning of the party scene. At measure 112, the composer indicates that CD track 3 (pre-recorded effects and music) is to begin. Then, the volume of the pre-recorded party music increases over several measures, fading in as in the film version. Thus far Neuwirth's creativity represents as literal an adaptation as technology allows. The entrance of the Mystery Man in measure 137 maintains the dynamic level of the party music which still sounds layered atop the orchestral score in an Ives-like pluralism. Measure 165 begins both the fade out of the CD and the conversation between Fred and Mystery Man. The fading of the party music is also taken directly from the Lynch film. Just as Mystery Man approaches Fred, the party music (CD Track 3) begins to fade

allowing their bizarre and frightening conversation to come to the forefront of the texture.

The conversation is as follows:

Mystery Man: We've met before haven't we?

Fred: I don't think so. Where was it?

Mystery Man: At your house. Remember?

Fred: No, no. I don't. I don't.

Mystery Man: In fact, I'm there right now.

Fred: What do you mean? You're where right now?

Mystery Man: At your house.

Fred: That's absurd.

Mystery Man: Call me. Dial your number. Go ahead. Call me.

Mystery Man: I told you I was there.

Fred: How did you do that? How did you get into my house?

Mystery Man: You invited me.

Fred: Who are you?

Mystery Man: (laughs) Give me my phone back.⁴⁴

The idea that a person can be in two places simultaneously is preposterous, and yet, Mystery Man proves to Fred that he is both at the party conversing with him and at Fred's house talking to him on the phone. This conversation reveals the timelessness and spacelessness of Mystery Man. As such, it is an important conversation brought to the

⁴⁴ Olga Neuwirth. . *Lost Highway*. Revised version- September 2006. Mainz, Germany: Boosey & Hawkes, 2006. pp. 31-40. mm. 146-195.

forefront of the texture by fading the party music out. Neuwirth parallels Lynch in this way, and magnifies the original meaning of this scene by highlighting the ubiquitousness of Mystery Man through multiple layers of sound happening simultaneously. She furthers this textural layering in measure 191 with a digital sound effect enhancing the bizarre tone of the conversation. A recorded sample two measures later accompanies Mystery Man's request, "Give me my phone back."⁴⁵ Then, as the conversation ends, a final sample enters in measure 197, and the composer brings us and Fred back to the party by fading the party music back in at measure 201. Again Neuwirth has used sound effects layered on top of the orchestral score to create the same tone Lynch achieves in his film, paralleling what Lynch does with the party music and representing the inner space of the characters with musical space. What the composer preserves through the technology is exactly what Lynch uses to magnify a specific moment, conversation, or event; and in so doing, Neuwirth has honored the source material with a creative solution to the limitations of live theater and opera.

Continuing, the operatic adaptation follows the plot of the movie closely through the receipt of the third anonymous video tape showing the murder of Fred's wife. Fred's arrest and transformation, and Pete's release and return to work immediately follow. The extended techniques and unusual yet effective inclusions of sound effects and electronic music are well exemplified in the Mr. Eddy rage scene during Pete's first experience back at work. The relationship between Pete and Mr. Eddy is established simply by the fact that Mr. Eddy has been asking for Pete specifically during his absence from the garage. Immediately upon Pete's return, Mr. Eddy arrives with work for him and inquires

⁴⁵ Ibid. pp. 39. mm. 193.

about an obvious injury Pete received. Mr. Eddy asks if someone is giving him trouble and offers to take care of the problem.⁴⁶ Clearly Mr. Eddy cares for Pete, even if the means by which he shows it are questionable. As the scene continues, the opera encounters the dilemma of showing the tailgating and car crash which enrage Mr. Eddy. Rather than using technology, special effects, or some other tool Neuwirth may have invented and employed, she and co-librettist Jelineck change the scene. With the removal of the “provocative” tailgating, the issue of what would motivate Mr. Eddy to beat a man for not obeying the rules must be dealt with. German musician, writer, and theater scholar Stefan Drees describes the adaptation of this scene from film to opera:

As their leitmotif for reworking the original script into a libretto, Olga Neuwirth and Elfriede Jelinek have taken the fact that there is a fundamental difference between the ways in which material can be treated for the cinema and for the theatre. Adaptation was unavoidable in the case of those dramatically important scenes in *Mulholland Drive* when Mr. Eddy proves himself to be a man obsessed with power, ready to use violence to implement his view of the world: Lynch demonstrates the uncontrollability of his protagonist in a car ride which develops into a chase and culminates in physical aggression. The everyday code of behaviour unexpectedly tips over into excessive violence, which finds a release valve in his helpless vis-à-vis. Furthermore, in the soundtrack “Mr. Eddy’s Theme” composed by Angelo Badalamenti, cool jazz tones

⁴⁶ Olga Neuwirth. . *Lost Highway*. Revised version- September 2006. Mainz, Germany: Boosey & Hawkes, 2006. pp. 92-96. mm. 496-520.

provide a contrast to the car chase while the beating-up sequence is silent. As a substitute, Jelinek and Neuwirth have devised a scene in which the act of ignoring a “no smoking” sign in the car repair shop serves as the trigger for an outbreak of violence. Although the verbal discourse displays parallels to the film, its use of language reveals a much greater lack of content than the original. The violation of the smoking ban is judged to be antisocial behaviour, a physical attack on the ruling system, and has to be sanctioned by the use of violence in order to make way for ethical renewal. The fascistoid structures of this argumentation are suddenly illuminated in the repetition of hackneyed phrases and set verbal constructions, condensed to the point of redundancy by the musical assistance of live electronic loops. In this way, the web of language and the basic structures of thinking are exposed step by step, eventually revealing themselves to be the speech of a highly pathological human being, to whom Neuwirth, in a note to her score, attributes a desire ‘to kill with words.’⁴⁷

Drees directly addresses the need to adapt a car chase scene into a different venue from film to opera. While his criticism of the librettists’ use of language “eventually” providing insight into a character may be fair, perhaps he fails to consider the sheer absurdity of giving a man a beating for smoking in a non-smoking zone, and the insight this action provides into Mr. Eddy. In Neuwirth’s operatic adaptation, the action seems to provide this psychological insight, and the verbiage only magnifies it. Further, using

⁴⁷ Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. Liner Notes. pp. 35-36.

repetition and rhythmic devices offered from looping text, the composer successfully unites the language Drees calls hackneyed to the pathological behavior of Mr. Eddy in this scene. For reference, Figure 2.5 shows the vocal portion of the score for this scene.

The musical score is handwritten and consists of three systems. The first system features a vocal line with the lyrics "Hey, di-dit you see the signs? it says". The second system shows Mr. Eddy's response: "No smoo-king." The third system, marked with a circled "554", shows a vocal line with the lyrics "they listen, what's a mat-ter? There's no smoo-king here. D'ya know why? Because it's dangerous to". The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (f, ff), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions in German and English.

Figure 2.5

(P)	(PP)
smoke here. Don't you see the signs? There are gasoline fumes all around. 'Don't ya smell em? You wanna blow us all up?'	

Elektr.	(59)	
		← 7 (m)
(Mann)		(Der Mann raucht provokant weiter, mustert Mr. Eddy, der ihm gar nichts zu befehlen hat)

Mr. Eddy stürzt sich auf ihn und . . .

Figure 2.5 cont.

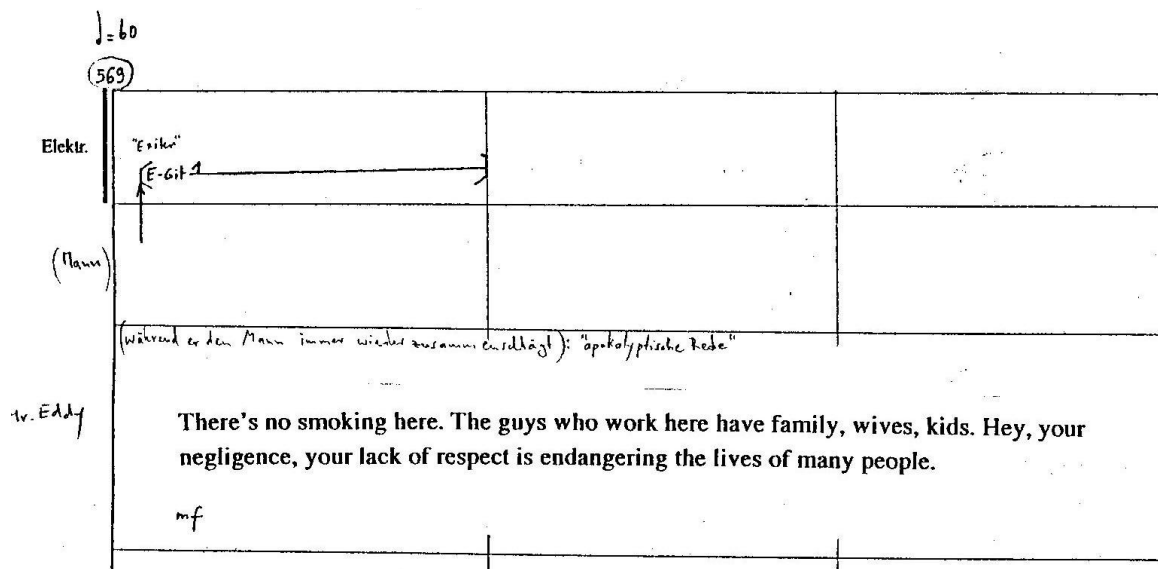
Mr. Eddy

... und gibt ihm einen trockenen Schwinger, sehr professionell, seine Bodyguards eilen links und rechts an seine Seite, bleiben abwartend, aber gefährlich, stehen und flankieren ihn, während er den Mann zusammenschlägt.

	2j	3j	2j	3j
lekt.	① (E-gt)			②
inn				
Eddy	 see things that way	^ They just don't think. ^ Don't think about others.		② They just think

	2j	3j	2j
		①	
	 Don't think about... off-ers	^ Just think about themselves. Just because they can't refrain from smoking, they endanger the lives of fine, upstanding dads.	

Figure 2.5 cont.



21

31

21

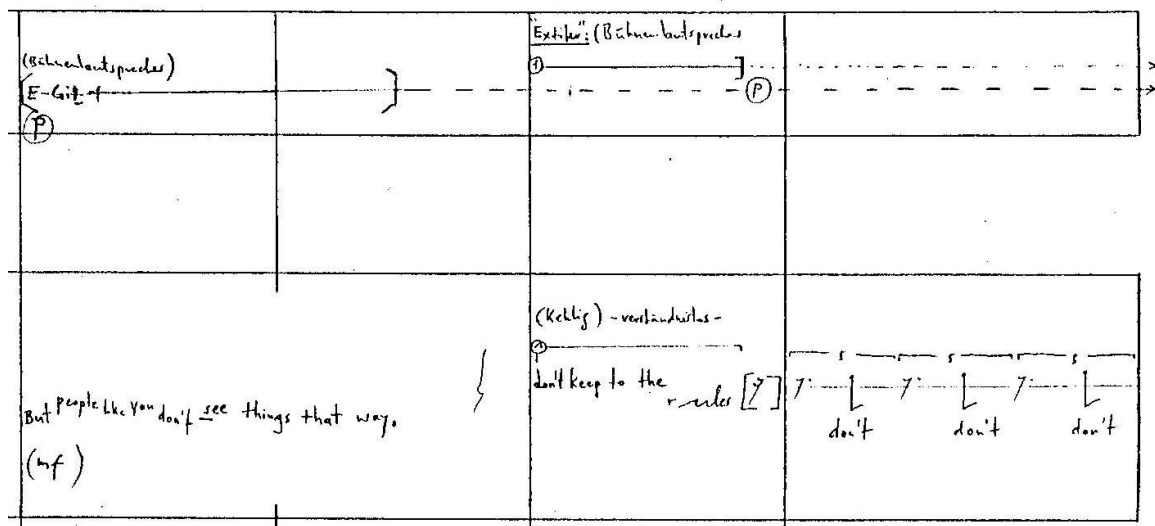


Figure 2.5 cont.

(s 91)

② ③

(1)

mf

p

④

People like you ^{pp} are dangerous

mf

are dan-ger-ous are are are dan-ger-ous

edukell
(aufgeklärt)

to the environment, to public welfare, to the whole country. Your kind doesn't have the right to live in civilized society.

doesn't doesn't doesn't have the

Figure 2.5 cont.

1) 2) 4x ; (*) (602)

Elektr.	(E-6:12)		
(Manu)			
Mr. Eddy	<p>(has an Kellner)</p> <p>right</p>	<p>to live</p>	<p>doesn't have the right to live</p>

3)

		(Der Mann nicht schwach)	
(total chaotic)			
No smoking here. It's written clearly on the signs. Or can't you read? You see them, don't you?			Good. Okay, you see them
f			(f)

Figure 2.5 cont.

608

Elektr. E-GHz 7

(Man)

Mv. Eddy

That makes matters worse. You can see the signs, but you ignore them intentionally.

you i-guess in-ten-tion-ally you you you i-guess then you i-guess in-ten-tion-ally

(ab hier variiert am Kehlkopf-gespräch -)

Listen, for the very last time, won't you finally get it through your head that rules are there to be obeyed?

Figure 2.5 cont.

	<p>616</p> <p>(E-cg-12)</p> <p>Elektr.</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>		
(Mann)			
Mr. Eddy	<p>5</p> <p>(Millyn Ed.)</p> <p>to be o-beyed</p>	<p>⚡</p>	<p>We gotta deal with people like you.</p> <p>ff</p>

		<p>Wiederholung gilt nur für Menschen (Mr. Eddy spricht darüber)</p>
<p>We gotta get rid of people like you.</p>	<p>once and for all</p>	<p>If we ever have an opportunity to consider a moral renewal, people like you won't be around, because we've dealt with you already. We're gonna settle with people like you once and for all. Let's get things in order right now.</p> <p>f</p>

Figure 2.5 cont.

625 5x (630)

Elektr. (4) (5) (6)

(er schlägt den Mann)

It's not possible to

ff

Handwritten musical notation and lyrics are present in the staves.

Handwritten musical notation and lyrics are present in the staves.

reach people like you any other way. They just don't listen.

We'll make them listen to us

ff

636

Elektr. (A-Pos) (1) (2)

(Man)

Handwritten musical notation and lyrics are present in the staves.

Character like you

be e-lim-i-nat-ed

Handwritten musical notation and lyrics are present in the staves.

Handwritten musical notation and lyrics are present in the staves.

Figure 2.5 cont.

T-Ser E-6.13 (7)	B-KL T-Ser E-6.13 (7)	E-6.13 (7)
(total helikopter. And durch den... Explosions... Wille... Silben... - plus... Tisch... auf...) (Wörter... aufeinander... nehmen)		
You coulda killed us all. We are gonna deal with you. (ff)		

(648) B-KL T-Ser E-6.13 (7)				
lectr. (7)				
Allright now, will you pick up your cigarette?				Let's go! Put it out! ^

	(Der Mann bückt sich blutüberströmt und hebt den Stummel auf)	
Now!		

Figure 2.5 cont.

	656		
Hokir.	{B.vl} - - - - - {T.vr} - - - - - {E.Gl} - - - - - "Unbelievable, you could've killed us all!" ↑ (f) durch ganzen Raum		(H)
Mann			
Mv. Ell.	(total überfordert) (Stimme überschallt mit) Okay. And now you go over to the ashtray there and ^{2x} put it out in a proper way. fff		C'mon, let's go!

(H)			
	(der Mann stolpert zu einem mit Sand gefüllten großen Aschenbecher und drückt seine Zigarette aus, die eh schon ausgegangen ist. Er torkelt, schwer angeschlagen)		

Figure 2.5 cont.

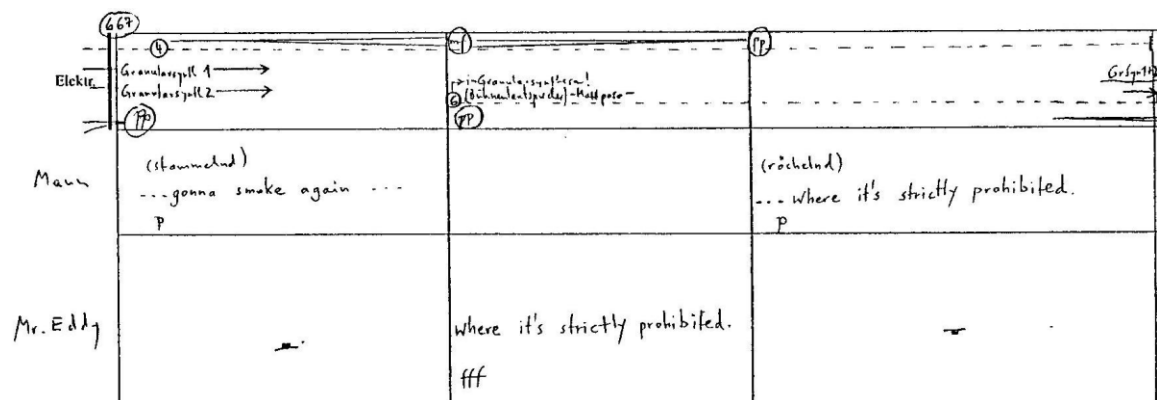
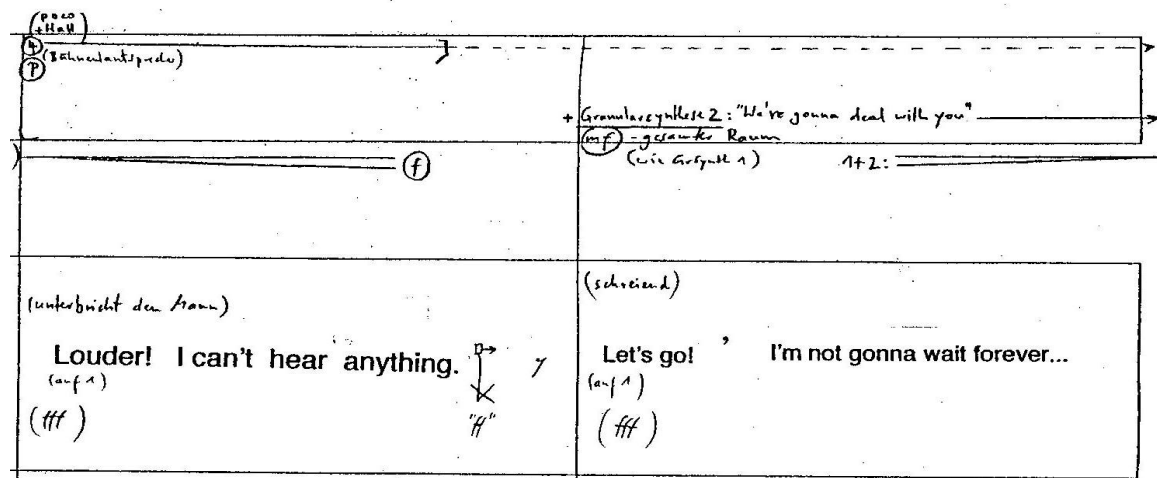
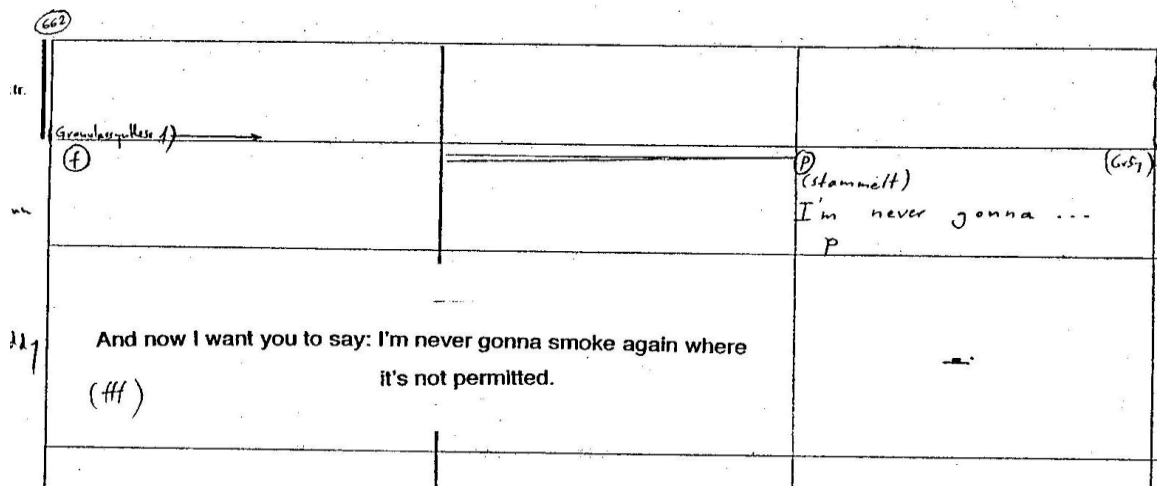


Figure 2.5 cont.

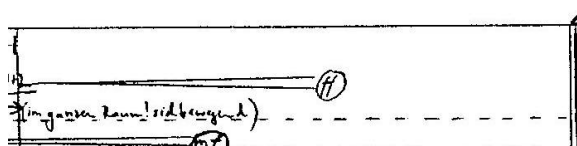
	
	<p>in 3. Wdh.</p>
<p>(Mr. Eddy schlägt ihn kurz und rasch zusammen, bis er liegenbleibt, tritt noch einmal gegen ihn)</p>	<p>- spricht über die Wiederholungen darüber - (sch. schnell gesprochen, aber mit ff-Tönen unterbrochen) If people like that could desist from their inappropriate pride just once before it was too late and do what people told them to do, the world would be a better place. ' Well, he'll keep that in mind. ff</p>

Figure 2.5 Mr. Eddy's vocal line

Lost Highway by Olga Neuwirth and Elfriede Jelenick
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One final scene which provides interesting material relating to the adaptation of a film to an opera, the challenges it provides, and the way Neuwirth has dealt with them is the scene which is arguably the climax of the whole piece- the murder of Dick Laurent. This scene, and the compositional techniques therein, also provide further insight into what makes Olga Neuwirth's opera, *Lost Highway*, a clear example of cinemopera. We know that Fred and Pete are the same person, but revealed in one of the garage scenes is the observation by two detectives (who parallel the detectives from the beginning of the show investigating the anonymous tapes) that the character we know as Mr. Eddy is Dick Laurent. Recall that the first line of both the film and opera versions is, "Dick Laurent is dead." Mr. Eddy/Dick Laurent is shot to death by Pete (Fred's psychogenic fugue identity) to remove him as an obstacle in his relationship with Alice (Renee's alter-identity). The death aria is intriguing musically and dramatically, and reveals more of what makes *Lost Highway* true cinemopera. The twenty-five measures comprising Mr.

Eddy's death aria hold further extended techniques which could, arguably, come directly from film. Neuwirth indicates, "airy and closed-throat sounds"⁴⁸ be produced during the time between when Fred shoots Dick Laurent, and his actual death from the shot. These measures are to mimic the sounds a dying person would make, and are further colored by the heterogeneousness which critics agree makes this score so intriguing. For the climax of the opera the composer writes her thickest texture. With the entire orchestra, electronic music in the form of sound effects, and sound loops scored for the death aria, Olga Neuwirth musters her compositional might to match the Lynchian drama in this moment arriving at the opera's apex.

In her opera, *Lost Highway*, Olga Neuwirth has expanded the boundaries of what we think of as opera, and in so doing exemplifies the modern trend in opera herein called cinemopera. Through the intertextuality of this opera which includes the cinematic source material of the David Lynch film, the association with the French writer, Paul Valéry, in the introduction, the *verismo* ideals represented by the characters in this show, and the inclusion of technology such as television, electronic music, and sound effects, Neuwirth creates a firm sense of intertext, the result of which conjures networks of meaning which capture and reinforce the tone, plot, and psychological issues explored in David Lynch's film with great success. Though the critics' comment on her colorful story telling and generally agree that *Lost Highway* is an effective piece, some fail to explore the depth of these networks of meaning created by the elements of Neuwirth's opera which make it

⁴⁸ Olga Neuwirth. . *Lost Highway*. Revised version- September 2006. Mainz, Germany: Boosey & Hawkes, 2006. pp. 235-240. mm. 1313-1338. This indication occurs throughout the death aria, and is in some cases looped. Further, when Mr. Eddy/Dick Laurent speaks these sound indications happen both before and after.

cinemopera. The composer comments on her choice of this film as source material as follows:

Why take *Lost Highway* as the basis for a piece of music theatre? ...First of all, apart from the fact that *Lost Highway* touched me very directly, I was fascinated by Lynch and Gifford's radical setting of accounts with the narrative as progressive action. This impossibility of escape from a situation, this unmerciful (time) loop that can make one crazy once one gets caught up in it, presented a basic compositional challenge. It was the demontage of a voyeuristic view of things that oversees and unifies everything. This other view, which has no referential function, but is purely an aesthetic means of expression, inspired me to reflect upon what this could mean musically. For it is a way of looking for something that cannot be uttered. With regard to music, as opposed to life, this idea is very close to me. Furthermore, the various registers of the colours of the sound of language in Lynch, from whispering to explosions of laughter, seemed to me to be directly suitable for music theatre as I imagine it: no beginning, no middle, no end; innumerable (architectural and emotional) spaces inside and outside; what is real and what is phantasmal? The mundane alongside the mystical; all human utterances from a howl to a shout, from laughter to despair, existing alongside one another. All that, as well as the *nihil firmum* and the existential, unavoidable question

concerning doubtfulness and the foundations of human existence were
decisive in making me dare to approach this disturbing material.⁴⁹

Neuwirth luxuriates in Lynch's characters, adapting them for the stage, and writes an opera full of "sound space"⁵⁰ to enhance the communication of Lynch's original message- we are all doomed to failure and cannot escape. Though dark, the degree to which the opera, *Lost Highway*, creates intertext, parallels film, and utilizes film-like effects places it at the forefront of the cinemopera movement. Thusly, it emerges as a superb example of cinemopera. Of interesting note is that Neuwirth herself uses different language than the designation opera in her score when describing the work. In addressing her work, the composer uses the terms, "music theatre," and "musical play."⁵¹ It is specifically for this reason the term cinemopera is applied- to this point, no description of genre applies to this work as thoroughly as one would hope, but cinemopera seems more than sufficient.

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⁴⁹ Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. Liner Notes. pp. 37. These are Olga Neuwirth's words in her explanation of why she chose *Lost Highway* to set as an opera.

⁵⁰ Olga Neuwirth. *Lost Highway*. Oberndorf, Austria: Kairos, 2006. Liner Notes. pp. 3. These are the composer's words describing her work.

⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 3. These are the composer's words describing her work.

CHAPTER 3: Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*: East Meets West in Cinematic Scope

Composer, Tan Dun (b. 1957), is a well-known, prominent, and award-winning film composer having written such film scores as *Fallen* (1998), *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), *Hero* (2002), and *The Banquet* (2006). For his score for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Tan was nominated for and received many prestigious awards in the film and music industries including but not limited to an ASCAP award and an Oscar.⁵² Though his career and compositional output has much greater breadth than addressed herein, the importance of the film industry and film music in his career is undeniable. Given his prominence in film scoring, penchant for classical composition combining Eastern and Western traditions, and his professional association with the Metropolitan Opera it is not surprising that Tan Dun's opera, *The First Emperor*, commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, bridges the gap between the operatic world and the film world in multiple ways, and expresses the intertextuality discussed herein representative of cinemopera.

The First Emperor was premiered by the Metropolitan Opera on December 21st, 2006,⁵³ and has roots in Chinese history through two works: *Historical Records* by Sima Qian, and a screenplay by Lu Wei for source material, which revolves around the unification of the Chinese Empire and assembly of the Great Wall of China. The Lu Wei screenplay yielded the movie *Qin Song*, with which Tan Dun was involved as its film score composer. The premiere of Tan's opera saw mixed reviews in spite of the heavy

⁵² The Internet Movie Database. (Accessed 12 June, 2010). <<http://www.imdb.com>>

⁵³ The Metropolitan Opera. (Accessed 3 June 2010), <<http://www.metoperafamily.org>>

hitters comprising its original cast including Placido Domingo in the role of Emperor Qin, Paul Groves in the role of Gao Jianli, Elizabeth Futral as the Princess Yueyang, Michelle DeYoung as the Shaman, and three renown performers from the Eastern tradition making the cast an East meets West collaboration: Hao Jiang Tian, Haijing Fu, and Wu-Hsing Kuo. Anthony Tommasini of the New York Times describes the premiere:

...music drives the theatrical experience of opera, and Mr. Tan's score is an enormous disappointment, all the more so because whole stretches of it, and many arresting musical strokes, confirm his gifts.

The opera, with a libretto in English by Mr. Tan and Ha Jin, begins hauntingly with sounds of the East. Muffled drums and the humming drone of the waterphone (a bowed instrument with a bowl full of water) seem to come from the beyond, as low tremolos and a slinky melody emerge from the strings. The Yin-Yang Master (Wu Hsing-Kuo), singing in the style of Peking opera, with nasal tone and vocal slides, takes us back 2,000 years to introduce the story of the emperor, who has roused his army and the people of Qin (pronounced chin) to conquer their neighbors and ward off barbarians. A row of 12 costumed palace musicians playing enormous Chinese drums thwack out pummeling rhythms as the riled-up choristers, the people of Qin, ask in chilling outbursts who their next victims will be.

The musical problems start shortly after Mr. Domingo appears, in the regalia of the emperor, and calls for the people to desist in their savage cries. He now

controls the most feared army in the land and is bent on wiping out cultural differences in the conquered regions of China. What his nation needs is a stirring musical anthem to foster unity, he explains, in the opera's first flight into lyricism.

But Mr. Tan's approach to operatic lyricism and vocal writing seems ill-conceived. In preparing this work, he drew on his studies of ancient Chinese folk music, filtering those styles through techniques learned by attending almost every opera the Met produced during his years in New York, starting with his days as a graduate student and a fledgling professional musician. He wanted "The First Emperor" to sing, like the Italian operas he and countless other buffs adore.

His music does sing. And sing. And sing. On and on. Whatever the mood of the moment, whether dreamy, defiant, sensual or tragic, as soon as the characters break into song, the melodic lines are inevitably long, arching and slow. Even when the orchestra bustles with intensity, the often cloying vocal lines hovering above still move with almost unvarying deliberateness. In the Italian operas Mr. Tan has in mind — say, Puccini's "Turandot" — the pacing of vocal lines accords with the impetuosity of the moment and the flow of the words. Mr. Tan's goal in this work, it would seem, was to create a ritualistic and hypnotic lyricism. But "The First Emperor" gives soaring melody a bad name.

Also, because Mr. Tan integrates Chinese melodic elements into the music, the vocal lines continually move by wide and sometimes awkward leaps to unusual notes, making the phrases tiring for the singers. There is undeniable artistry at work in all this. Playing through these passages on the piano (from the piano-vocal score), I found some of Mr. Tan's exotic harmonies and elusive vocal lines enticing. But a little of this goes a long way.⁵⁴

Clearly Anthony Tommasini of the New York Times holds Tan in high esteem as a composer and musician, but finds this particular work lacking in craftsmanship and variability of style. Nonetheless, it was a crowd pleaser at its premiere if the lengthy ovation it received is any indication.

That Tan Dun's career straddles both Western classical concert music and Eastern film music makes him and his work an interesting musicological study. That his opera, *The First Emperor*, shares characteristics with both opera and film, and involves East and West makes it a unique representation of Tan's place in the artistic world, his work, and the kind of intertextuality examined in this document. Tan Dun draws primarily on ancient history for *The First Emperor*, which is a typical type of operatic source material not addressed herein. Nonetheless, the significance of the historical events upon which this opera focuses as well as Tan's musical conception of them makes this opera grand enough to call cinematic. *The*

⁵⁴ The New York Times. (Accessed 20 September, 2010),
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/23/arts/music/23empe.html?_r=2&oref=slogin>

First Emperor takes a specific event in Chinese history, that of the unification of China and building of the Great Wall under Emperor Qin, and presents it in much the same way as a movie might. This is perhaps due in part to the screenplay source material, and the initial realization of that screenplay as a movie in which Tan was involved. Because the composer morphs his opera with Chinese history and film, incorporates exoticism *via* Peking opera style and kabuki, and uses the chorus to further the Eastern flavor of this work, Tan creates a clear example of cinemopera and cross-cultural intertextuality in *The First Emperor*, and does so using specific compositional and musical devices.

Drawing specific connections between Tan Dun's *The First Emperor* and the film world is a simple task. First, the opera is based on two documents emerging from Chinese history, one of which is a screenplay showing a clear relationship with film. *The Legend of Bloody Zhang*, by Lu Wei is a screenplay which came to fruition in the movie *Qin Song* (1996), also called *The Emperor's Shadow*. While there is a discrepancy regarding the title of the screenplay on which *The First Emperor* is based,⁵⁵ the fact remains that Tan's source material comes directly from the film industry, specifically in the form of a screenplay that served as the basis for the movie *Qin Song*. The unpublished perusal score from Schirmer

⁵⁵ Tan's score cites the screenplay, *The Legend of Bloody Zhang*, by Lu Wei as source material whereas the Metropolitan Opera's website lists a screenplay named *The Emperor's Shadow* also by Lu Wei as source material. The inclusion of *Historical Records* remains consistent in both sources, as does the fact that the screenplay on which *The First Emperor* is based (whatever name is given between sources) is the same screenplay used for the movie, *Qin Song*. The most likely explanation for the discrepancy is that the Met website has used the title of the movie on which the screenplay is based for the title of the screenplay. Its most likely title is *The Legend of Bloody Zhang*.

indicates the work is also based on *Historical Records* by Sima Qian, on which all sources agree, in addition to the aforementioned screenplay.⁵⁶ However, what no sources mention is the deeper link between Tan's score and the movie, *Qin Song*. The screenplay on which *Qin Song* is based is the same screenplay on which Tan based his opera. Having worked on the film project *Qin Song* also called *The Emperor's Shadow*, which is the story of China's first emperor, provides a much deeper link than the choice of source material. Tan undoubtedly drew upon his experience with the film as the inspiration for his work in writing *The First Emperor*. While speculative, it seems a strong and logical inference to make that Tan's involvement with *Qin Song* led him to choose the screenplay on which the movie is based for his opera's source material. Tan seems to have drawn on both his experience with *Qin Song* as well as his knowledge of Chinese history for the creation of *The First Emperor*. In so doing, the composer has created a concrete intertext between his opera and film pointing the way towards cinemopera.

The clear plot/subplot structure of the opera comes directly from the construction of the film adding to the amount of intertext. The narrative hook in *The First Emperor* is the question, "Who will be the next for us to kill, to burn, to sacrifice? So we can stop the barbarians and build the imperial dream. The people of Wu are crying. How many lives

⁵⁶ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. The introductory material in the piano/vocal score prior to the music indicates that this opera is "Based on *Historical Records* by Sima Qian (c. 145 B.C. – 85 B.C.) and on the screenplay, *The Legend of the Bloody Zheng*, by Lu Wei." Of interesting note is that the Met's website names Lu Wei's screenplay as *The Emperor's Shadow*, which also became the alternate title for the 1996 film *Qin Song* which was based on the screenplay the title of which is in question.

must we sacrifice?”⁵⁷ Like many films, including *Qin Song*, the narrative hook arrives early to pique the audience’s interest; and, in this way, Tan’s *The First Emperor* parallels the film. Further, as the opera progresses, Tan honors the form of the screenplay in its scene construction. Alternating between the plot which centers on Qin’s desire to unify China and have a national anthem composed, and the subplot revolving around a love triangle, in much the same way as the screenplay, allows the composer to build the tension of the desire for a unified China in the plot by slowing its pace through the insertion of scenes which deal specifically with the love story of Gao Jian-li and Princess Yue-yang. All of these events crescendo towards the unification of China, and coronation of its first Emperor with a parallel ordering of scenes between the film and the opera. Finally the resolution of the opera occurs, bringing closure to both plot and sub-plot simultaneously in much the same way as the movie. The amount of parallels in construction makes for an intertextual adaptation quite exemplary of cinemopera.

Regarding the use of historical context through Sima Qian’s *Historical Records*, it is a very common feature of opera from all time periods to in some way involve history; so, while this is not a profound choice by the composer, nor does it reveal further links to the film world, there are other factors that do extend the association between opera and film. The production designer of Tan Dun’s *The First Emperor* is Zhang Yimou, a prominent Eastern film director who directed *Hero* for which Tan Dun wrote the score. This association likely led to their collaboration for Tan’s opera deepening the magnetism between opera and film in this project. Also, as is typical of Tan’s compositional style (perhaps as a side-effect of many of the recent films for which he has written the scores

⁵⁷ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 14-19. mm. 135-181.

being marketed to a predominantly Western audience), the score for *The First Emperor* combines East and West in several regards. This juxtaposition exemplifies one type of the intertextuality of modern opera, and, when combined with the aforementioned associations with the film industry, allows the score to be neatly classified as cinemopera.

The incorporation of exoticism is another feature of *The First Emperor* that highlights the intertextual nature of this work. First and most obviously, with an opera based on Chinese history it stands to reason that there will be elements which one could label exoticism such as using China as the setting and focusing on Chinese characters. Since this level of observation is neither scholarly nor particularly intertextual, we will dig deeper into Tan's score to uncover his use of exoticism. The opening of the show is a prologue rather than an overture, which sets the scene—time and place—from which the opera begins. The prologue to *The First Emperor* is sung in the Peking opera style which is quite nasal and utilizes vocal slides. For the prologue of a typical Western opera to be performed in Chinese (when the rest of the score is in English) using Peking Opera vocal techniques is unprecedented. It enhances the realistic nature of the work elevating it to a stylistic and historical reenactment piece rather than more typical, fictitious opera. Immediately, the association with Leoncavallo's prologue to *I Pagliacci*, "Si puo'," comes to mind raising the level of intertextuality. The prologue, therefore, serves as intertext in its relationship to *I Pagliacci* as well as its exoticism. See Figure 3.1 as an example of the exotic elements in the prologue of Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*.

THE FIRST EMPEROR

ACT I: SHADOW Scene 1

Ha Jin & Tan Dun

Tan Dun

Larghetto (♩ = 60)
[From behind the curtain comes the sound of drums and stones.]

senza misura

waterphone

p *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

(timp.)

4 str. tr

ppp *fff* *f*

6 str. tr

fff *f*

senza misura

8 Mast.

YIN-YANG MASTER:
(Vocalizing in Peking Opera Style):
(in Chinese)
More than two thousand years ago
wars ravaged China,
where seven states faced one another
striving for dominance.

Among them the king of Qin was the most powerful.
He conquered the other six states,
walled the northern border
and unified the land under heaven.
Thus, he became China's first ruler -
the First Emperor!

mf *p* *ppp* *f* *mf* *p*

Figure 3.1 Prologue of Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*

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This scene also begins Tan's exploration of a deeper, intertextual exoticism that pervades the opera by immediately juxtaposing Peking opera style with a mostly Western orchestra save the few instruments Tan adds for Eastern color. The orchestration revealing itself in the prologue is of interesting note as well in that it includes some specifically Eastern instruments and an instrument invented by Tan Dun, the waterphone. Here however, Tan has not only included the waterphone, but he has partnered it with the Tibetan Singing Bowl. The use of water based instruments reflects a contemporary, open approach to musical sound, and is unorthodox for an opera orchestra. Further, due to the specific inclusion of the Tibetan Singing Bowl, instrumentation becomes another example of exoticism found in *The First Emperor* which Tan employs and takes to an intertextual level. The network of association Tan creates with these instruments is both exotic and intertextual. Generally noted by Kalanik who states, "Nonetheless, it is precisely Chinese and Asian musical elements with Western forms and instrumentation, those that were banned in the revolution that Tan Dun has utilized in his career in the concert hall as well as in film."⁵⁸ One could easily contend that this combination pervades *The First Emperor*, rearing its head in many facets including the unique instrumentation of the score; and, since Kalanik's observation of Tan's career links this technique to both his concert music and film scoring, it shows another parallel between *The First Emperor* and film. This parallel is characteristic of cinemopera, and the degree to which Tan's practices this parallel is quite high.

⁵⁸ Kathryn Kalinak. *Film Music: A Very Short Introduction*. pp. 82-83.

Tan's fascination with water in a musical context pervades his compositions. For example, his *Water Concerto for Water Percussion and Orchestra* includes the waterphone as a featured part of the orchestra. Of his work Tan said:

Water is an element you can't block. You can block land, you can say this is China and this is Russia, but water has no such frontiers.

What I want to present... is music that is for listening to in a visual way, and watching in an audio way. I want it to be intoxicating. And I hope some people will listen and rediscover the life things, things that are around us but we don't notice.⁵⁹

Tan's waterphone plays beginning in the third measure of *The First Emperor* destroying the expectation of a typical operatic orchestra and confirming the composer's fascination with the musical capabilities of water. In combination with the Peking opera style of the Yin-Yang Master's vocal line and choreography, the waterphone helps establish a clear context of the East from within the musical traditions of the West as perhaps a nod to another well established and previously discussed operatic staple- exoticism. Exoticism spans Western opera from its beginnings, sometimes cited as the Janissary music in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus*

⁵⁹ Schirmer, G. (Accessed 5 June, 2010), <<http://www.schirmer.com>>

dem Serail,⁶⁰ through the twentieth century in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*⁶¹ and beyond to Stravinsky's *The Rakes Progress*.⁶² That Tan Dun continues this technique in his score for *The First Emperor* extends this compositional tradition into the present, and extends his score into the network of already established operas employing exoticism.

While Tan's specialized orchestra, which in addition to the waterphone, also includes a Japanese Koto, Tibetan Singing Bowl, Cowbell, Watergong, Chinese Gong, and Chinese Crash Cymbal, accompanies the prologue of the Yin-Yang Master, the chorus participates on stage performing a series of specially notated sounds and choreography which enhance the already established Chinese backdrop of this opera. The composer's instructions and examples of these sounds follow in Figures 3.2 through 3.4.

⁶⁰ Dahlhaus, Carl. *Nineteenth Century Music*. p. 302-303. Dahlhaus makes reference to the Jannisary music in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.

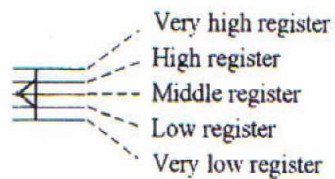
⁶¹ Both Julian Budden and Michele Girardi discuss elements of exoticism in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in their works listed in the bibliography of this document.

⁶² An idea of my own: that Baba the Turk's character represents "The Other" to round out Stravinsky's utilization of many tools which allows musicologists to classify *The Rake's Progress* as neo-classical.

Notes for Performance

Tutti (soloists, chorus, and orchestra):

Indefinite Pitch Clef for playing and vocalizing. Each player or singer should independently select his or her own pitch:



Chorus:






- 1)  Shout and raise right arm.
- 2)  Slap side of right leg with right hand.
- 3)  Shout and squat half way; slowly stand up again.
- 4)  Shout and stomp.
- 5)  Whispering.

Figure 3.2 The composer's instructions on notation found in the score.

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The First Emperor
Act I, Scene 1

3

A Più mosso (♩ = 65-69)

Shout and raise right arm

Shout and squat half way. Slowly stand up again.

Shout and stomp

Slap side of leg with right hand

drums

VI--

(Revised 2/15/08)

Measures 19-26 of the chorus score. The score is for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) voices, with piano accompaniment and drums. The tempo is 'Più mosso' (♩ = 65-69). The score includes dynamic markings (fff, sf, f, p, mf) and performance instructions in boxes. The lyrics are 'Ha', 'wu', 'ka', 'Ha-shi', 'ka', 'ka', 'ka', 'ka', 'Ha-shi', 'Ha-shi', 'Ha-shi', 'wu'.

Figure 3.3 Tan's notation in the chorus score.

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The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for Soprano (S) and Alto (A), the middle for Tenor (T) and Bass (B), and the bottom for Piano. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo/mood is marked 'Ad libitum'. The score begins with a measure number '66'. Dynamics include piano (*p*), fortissimo (*fff*), and sforzando (*sf*). The vocal parts have lyrics 'Wu' under several notes. The piano part features trills (*tr*) and trill bends (*tr^b*) throughout.

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Using the chorus in this unusual and ritualized way, Tan takes another tradition from Western opera, and uses it to magnify Eastern musical traditions which we can consider a kind of cross-cultural intertextuality reflective of exoticism. Whether intentional or not, by nature of both the subject matter and Tan's compositional concept of *The First Emperor*, he has clearly juxtaposed Eastern ideas and techniques into a Western medium, then combined the medium with film. By so doing, the composer has integrated several art forms into one work, the concept of which, as previously seen with Olga Neuwirth's *Lost Highway*, reflects Wagner's idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Through links to Chinese history and film, the incorporation of exoticism *via* Peking Opera style singing, using the chorus to further the Eastern flavor of this work, and expanding the operatic orchestra to include Eastern instruments, Tan creates a staunch intertext which powerfully combines with the film source material making it a shining example of cinemopera.

The composer's skill reveals itself to an even greater degree when the myriad compositional devices used to unify the piece are examined. These compositional tools highlight the cross cultural intertextuality of the piece and bring its storytelling into fullness. Beginning in measure sixty-four Tan writes a melody for the chorus doubled by the orchestra which has some unique characteristics. For a complete listing of the following analyses, please see Appendix 1. Using Forte set theory,⁶³ we discover that Tan uses the set class 7-19 for the chorus melody in measure sixty-four, structuring it on a

⁶³ Straus, Joseph. *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*. pp. 221-255 comprise Appendices 1-3. Further, Straus cites Allen Forte's *The Structure of Atonal Music* as the source from which he derives the charts found in these appendices.

septachord. When broken down into trichords, which seem to be the basis of much of the opening musical content in the vocal lines, the chorus melody is pieced together from the sets 3-5, 3-10, and 3-2. By dividing the 7-19 chorus melody into set classes of trichords, Tan may be using disparate musical materials to represent the kingdom of China in its non-unified state. The set classes 3-5, 3-10, and 3-2 into which Tan divides the 7-19 melody may be thought of as subsets of the whole chorus melody; thus, the composer seems to be using set theory to structure this portion of his score. That the chorus' music is loosely unified by set class groupings, and is quite aurally disjunct could lead the listener to conclude that Tan is using the chorus as the voice of the people of China. Though the Yin-Yang Master sings prior to the 7-19 chorus melody, he only ever sings two pitches per phrase (specifically the pitch classes 11 and 5 are grouped together, and pitch classes 7 and 11 are grouped together) which could be interpreted as a representation of the polarity of opinion regarding unification at this time in China. In Forte set theory, however, Yin-Yang Master's restriction to only two pitch classes per phrase makes his line inconclusive thus far. Then, in an interesting compositional stroke, Tan loosely structures the first Yin-Yang Master melody with more than two pitch classes on a trichord, this time the set class 3-7. He then continues the melody using the set class 4-27. Of interesting note is the occurrence of set class 3-10 within the 4-27 phrase. The Appendix explains this more thoroughly, but if we omit the pitch class 5 from the 4-27 phrase since it has already occurred in that measure, we find 3-10 as the remaining set class. As 3-10 is one of the set classes on which the opening chorus melody is structured, Tan makes a direct musical connection between the Yin-Yang Master and the chorus. This musical allusion could be dramatically interpreted as the composer's

way of including Yin-Yang Master as one of the voices of the people of China, and as liberating him from the restriction of two pitch classes perhaps representing the polarity of the political climate. Simply, the voice of the chorus could express the desire for unification which is then taken up by the Yin-Yang Master and expanded to bring “harmony to everything”⁶⁴ as his final pitch matches the chorus. By manipulating the different offerings of Forte set theory, Tan may be attempting to capture the need for unity in the opening relationship between the chorus and the Yin-Yang Master, for though they share a common pitch class set (3-10), and are loosely organized by trichords, the actual pitches they sing yielding those pitch class sets are different- almost as if they are saying the same things from different perspectives.

As the piece continues, we discover the opening melody of the zheng which reveals the set class 6-Z41. Not only is this noteworthy as the opening zheng melody, but its significance is seen later as it also relates to a Yin-Yang Master melody. The set class 6-Z41 is called a “Z-related set” for its shared interval vector with other set classes.⁶⁵ The zheng melody is quickly followed by the 4-27 melody of the Tibetan waterbowl. This melody’s significance is quickly seen as it is the same set class as Yin-Yang Master’s melody in the second phrase of measure seventy. Here, Tan has created yet another direct musical link revealed using Forte set theory which can, again, be seen in Appendix 1.

Forging ahead to uncover more theoretical relationships, Yin-Yang Master’s melody in

⁶⁴ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal Score. p.8, m. 70. The indication under Yin-Yang Master’s vocal line when he resolves to the final pitch is that it “brings harmony to everything.” The chorus has been droning the pitch f in several octaves until Master resolves to an f.

⁶⁵ Straus, Joseph. Introduction to Post Tonal Theory. pp. 80-82. “Z-related sets” are set classes which share the same interval vector but are not related by transposition or inversion. This relationship, though labeled by Straus, was first uncovered by David Lewin’s article, “The Intervallic Content of a Collection of Notes” which appeared in the 1960 Journal of Music Theory volume 4, pp.98-101. Though Lewin described it first, Forte labeled the phenomenon arbitrarily as ‘Z’ in pp. 21-24

measure seventy-five is the set class 4-Z29. This set shares an interesting relationship with the set class comprising a melody discussed later.

The next character to appear is the Shaman who represents the dark and spiritual. Her initial text “Come Spirits of awesome power who live in the high mountain and decide our fortunes” indicates the same need for unification previously expressed. Continuing our examination of musico-dramatic unity *via* pitch class sets, the Shaman’s first melody in measure ninety-six is the pitch class set 3-10 which comes directly from the trichords on which the opening chorus melody is structured. Simply, Shaman’s set class and the chorus’ set class are identical. Tan continues musically uniting principal characters’ voices with the people of China’s voice in the chorus as revealed using Forte set theory. The set class 3-10 seems to be the significant unifying force between the chorus, Yin-Yang Master, and Shaman. The Master’s voice is narrative expressing an invitation whereas the Shaman’s voice is powerful and exalted, yet they are both connected to the chorus.

Though both characters’ voices are derived from the people of China (literally and musically), they explore the issue of unification differently. The differences in their music may signify that they represent different factions of China’s people in spite of their musical oneness. The Shaman’s prayer beginning in measure 104 is the set class 4-Z15, the significance of which is that there is another pitch class set with the same interval vector. It is no coincidence that this opening prayer of the Shaman is the Z-related set 4-Z15. Indeed, this set class shares its interval vector with the Yin-Yang Master’s Z-related

set of 4-Z29. The two set classes 4-Z15 and Z-429 share identical interval vectors of 111111, and are the only two set classes of tetrachords to do so. In this way, Tan seems to be uniting the voice of the Shaman and the Master directly. In spite of the different perspectives of these two characters, their melodic material is quite musically connected, both to each other and to the chorus.

As the Shaman's prayer continues, Tan assigns her text "who live in the high mountain" the set class 5-19. This text represents an expansion or magnification of the previous text. As the text expands further, Tan adds one more pitch class (a musical expansion) into the Shaman's melody to parallel the textual clarification, this time an Eb (pitch class 3) yielding the set class 6-30 for the text, "and decide our fortunes." This ends the first sentence of the prayer. The next and last sentence sees one more pitch class added into its melody, this time an E natural (pitch class 4). The pitch class set for the final sentence of the prayer, "Send us your light so we can see." is another reference to the opening chorus melody as it is set class 7-19. For each phrase of text magnifying the meaning of what came before it, Tan adds one pitch which changes the identity of the set and increases the musical attributes available. In this way, the composer musically mirrors the prayer's text and intensifies its meaning with great skill while also musically uniting the Shaman with the chorus.

The Yin-Yang Master's next line in measure 124 sees a return to Tan's use of trichords (the set 3-8), which he directly hands off to the chorus in measure 130 as they sing the exact same notes the Master has been singing. This sharing of a pitch class set

seems to unify the Master, Shaman, and the people of China throughout the opening scene. As the Emperor enters, his first question upon hearing the music comprised of the previously examined pitch class sets is, “Is this the old music of Chu?”⁶⁶ Tan has returned to the two pitch class device initially used by the Yin-Yang Master, as a possible musical reflection of the polarity of unification and non-unification going on at the time. Clearly the music of Chu is not nationalistic and does not represent China, nonetheless, they are using this music to express their desire for unification providing a sense of musical irony. Furthering the duality expressed by the pitch classes is their highly polarized interval, a tritone. The Emperor asks his question using a tritone perhaps to make a statement about the polarity of unification and the work it will require. Tan parallels the text in that when a character magnifies his or her meaning, the music does so as well. Employing this concept, Tan writes a more stable melody for the Emperor in measures 192 through 196 as he expands upon his meaning, stating that the music of Chu does not move Heaven or Earth and therefore cannot strengthen the nation he envisions. Just as the Emperor’s character and musical representation thereof strengthen, he is challenged by the Chief Minister saying, “Your Majesty, since ancient times this has been the music of our land.” to which the Emperor replies with even more musical resolve due to the addition of an e to the pitch material making up this melody, “We are no longer in ancient times.”⁶⁷ Just as Tan did with the Shaman, as the Emperor’s text becomes more distinct in meaning, so do the pitch classes comprising his melody.

⁶⁶ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 20. mm. 190-191.

⁶⁷ Ibid. pp. 21. mm. 196-202.

At the entrance of the Princess in measure 218, the composer immediately pairs the harp and princess together. The harp takes up the interval of a perfect fifth; a common two-note device Tan uses for other characters' entrances as well. The perfect fifth is quickly inverted to a perfect fourth, which, because of its inversional relationship to a perfect fifth, does not add much tonal clarity. Tan makes the same musical gesture in measure 219 using the perfect fifth and its inversion, until the neighbor tone of a G enters which could, for the first time, imply the harmony of E minor. However, because of its weak metric placement in the measure and that it is a neighbor tone, the G does not imply E minor, and therefore its function is more ornamental rather than harmonic. The melodic contour of four notes with an ascending perfect fifth, ascending major second, and another ascending perfect fifth becomes prominent in this scene. For analytical purposes, I have labeled this sequence of intervals the "shadow motive" as it is primarily used to represent Gao Jian-li, also called the Shadow. Throughout the first two measures of the entrance of the Princess (measures 218-219), Tan introduces the shadow motive, and associates it with Princess Yue-yang. Then, in measure 220 Tan colors the orchestra's music by having them explore the beautiful anhemitonic pentatonic scale. The melody in the orchestra includes the notes of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale with the addition of a leading tone of C sharp in measure 220. By extending the previous compositional characterizations written by Tan Dun, the music of measure 220 may use the pentatonic scale to suggest that the Princess is perceived as the pinnacle of Chinese culture. That Tan uses this particular pentatonic scale to represent a unique Chinese character is perhaps a musical stereotype, but aurally and theoretically the scale gives a very clear characterization of the Princess.

To prepare the vocal line of the General, measure 221 moves towards an A minor tonality and has neither the shadow motive, nor the stereotypical pentatonic mode of the Princess's harp music. In an exploration of both A and E minor, we learn of the General's affinity for the Princess. He sings, "My Princess, Yue-yang" and holds her hand⁶⁸ clearly showing his feelings for her in spite of his stoic, warrior identity. From within the harmonic stability of E minor, the General quickly questions why the Emperor is reversing his military strategy to conquer Yan first, only to discover that the composer sought by the Emperor (whom he calls his shadow) is hiding there. The Emperor believes that a national anthem will help unify China, and for this, he needs the composer Gao Jian-li.⁶⁹ In this statement, the Emperor sings "Shadow" with the following melodic contour: an ascending perfect fifth followed by an ascending major second, and finally an ascending perfect fifth as seen in Figure 4.5.

⁶⁸ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 26-27. mm. 275-278.

⁶⁹ Ibid. pp. 21-22. mm. 202-211. The Emperor states, "We need new music: an anthem to inspire and unify our people. Music to nourish the soul, the true sound of Qin!!" Then in pp.24-25, mm. 246-253 he states, "Shadow, my composer... I shall have my Shadow compose the song the everlasting anthem of our Empire."

285 4-note motive

Emp. There the Sha - dow has been hi - ding. *fff*

Min. The Sha - dow?... The Sha - dow?... *mf*

Gen. The Sha - dow?... The Sha - dow?... *mf*

vc. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *fff*

(Revised 9/1/07)

Figure 3.5 The four-note Shadow motive.

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This is the exact same contour written for the Princess when her mother sings her name in measure 272 seen in Figure 3.6.

270 *mf*

Moth. you are no long - er a child. Yue - yang, vn. *mp* 4-note motive

Figure 3.6 Four-note motive

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This four note shadow motive introduced by the harp at the Princess's entrance may serve to foreshadow the unification of Gao Jian-li and Yue-yang, and is used several other times as the scene continues. Princess Yue-yang asks about the identity of the Shadow, and sings the four note shadow motive representing him again in measure 290 as seen in Figure 3.7. That she repeats this motive may continue to suggest their eventual unity. In measures 293-294, Emperor Qin sings the Shadow's name, Gao Jian-li. For this occasion, the composer has altered the four note motive slightly to include intervallic content of only ascending perfect fifths. As the identity of the Shadow becomes clear, Tan manipulates the shadow motive by using only one interval in this context. The ascending contour remains intact, this time lacking the major second which previously separated the perfect fifths so that only two leaps of a perfect fifth remain. This purification of the shadow motive can also be seen in Figure 3.7.

28 The First Emperor
Act I, Scene 1

--DE YUEYANG:
YY. *mf* Pa-pa, is Gao Jian-li the Sha - dow (ha) *rit.*

vc.

292 *p* YY. — you — of - ten men - tion? *mp* EMPEROR: *4-note motive altered* Gao Jian - li... *p*

wtrph.

Figure 3.7 The shadow motive as the Princess asks about Jian-li, and the purified version of the motive upon the Emperor's answer.

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At the first statement of Jian-li's real name, Tan has purified the motive to include only one interval. Again the four note shadow motive appears and is altered in measure 378 as Yue-yang sings the name Gao Jian-li. This alteration, however, is likely the result of a vocal consideration. The first interval of the motive is inverted to a descending perfect fourth. Rather than an ascending perfect fifth, Yue-yang sings the descending perfect fourth to begin the "shadow" motive seen in Figure 3.8. Having such a high soprano voice singing the role of Yue-yang makes the low D, which should begin the motive, more difficult to negotiate and project in a house as large as the Met. However, Tan has

creatively incorporated this specific alteration of the four note shadow motive into the next two statements which address the Shadow/Gao Jian-li character by another name, describing him “like a ghost.”⁷⁰

YY. 378 *mp* [The EMPEROR and GENERAL are surprised.]
Gao Jian-li. Pa - pa!

Moth. *f* (interrupts, shaking head) 4-note motive
That will nev - er be. Like a ghost

Min. *f* (interrupts, shaking head) 4-note motive
That will nev - er be. Like a

(Revised 9/1/07)

Figure 3.8 The shadow motive with an inverted first interval for vocal considerations.

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As the Mother and Minister sing to explain that Yue-yang will not meet Gao Jian-li because he will not be found (“Like a ghost, the Shadow will never be found”)⁷¹ they take over Yue-yang’s alteration of the shadow motive singing the words “be. Like a ghost” on a descending perfect fourth, ascending major second, and ascending perfect fifth as seen in Figure 3.9.

⁷⁰ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 34-35. mm. 381-382.

⁷¹ Ibid. pp. 34-35. mm. 380-384.

[The EMPEROR and GENERAL are surprised.]

YY.

Moth.

Emp.

Min.

That will nev-er be. Like a ghost.

ghost the Sha-dow will nev-er be

Figure 3.9 The modified shadow motive

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Two things are clear through the prevalent use of this motive: that this motive represents the Shadow, Gao Jian-li, and that the composer is likely using it in such a way that musically foreshadows the union of Gao Jian-li and Princess Yue-yang. This particular compositional device is not particularly innovative, but because the notes which result from the intervallic content of the motive are representatives of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, the motive itself draws upon the Asian stereotype often conjured by the sound of this scale unifying it with the rest of the score. It also provides further evidence of the exoticism inherent in Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*. One could go so far as to tie this motive's use into intertextuality by associating it with Wagner's use of *leitmotif* due to its clear and exclusive association with The Shadow, Gao Jian-li.

The first scene closes with a commitment from the full company to whom we have thus far been introduced to conquer Yan and find the Shadow, Gao Jian-li, from whom Emperor Qin intends to commission a national anthem for the kingdom of China. For finding Gao Jian-li, Emperor Qin offers his daughter, Yue-yang, as the prize to General Wang. As the curtain closes, the orchestra hums music comprised of only perfect fourths and fifths, and is accompanied by a trumpet whose line colors the sound. Much of the first scene is constructed using perfect fourths and fifths, which serve as a foundation upon which Tan brings musical unity and characterization using Forte set theory and *leitmotif*.

The second scene begins with a discussion between Emperor Qin and his Minister regarding logistics such as language, currency, and communication for the span of the empire. Their conversation is interrupted by General Wang who announces the capture of Gao Jian-li.⁷² The General's announcement is the first time the name Gao Jian-li is spoken in the second scene.⁷³ It is no surprise that Tan returns to the shadow motive in its purest form of strict ascending perfect fifths for this occasion which can be seen in Figure 3.10. It is sung by Wang as he speaks the name Gao Jian-li.

⁷² Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 49. mm. 102-104. General Wang announces, "I bring you joyous tidings: We have captured Gao Jian-li."

⁷³ Ibid. pp. 49. mm. 104.

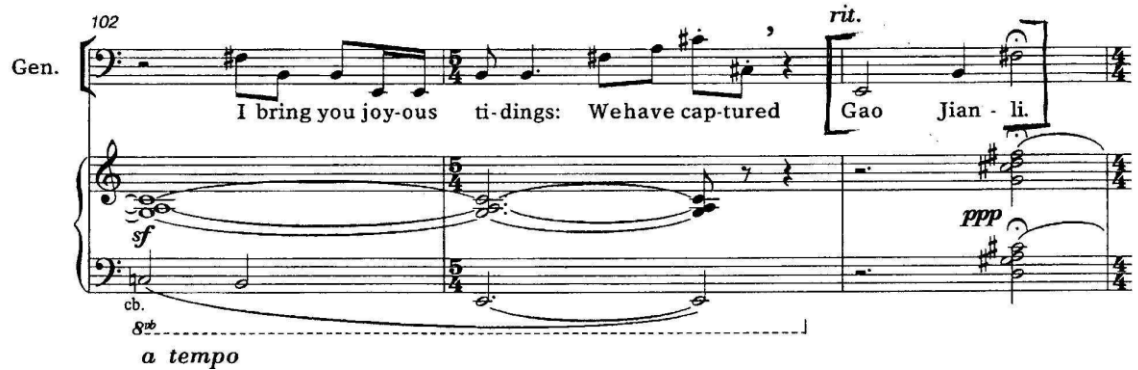


Figure 3.10 The purest form of the shadow motive

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As Jian-li enters the stage, Yue-yang questions his identity and status. When she sings “Shadow”⁷⁴ she also sings two ascending perfect fifths— the pure form of the shadow motive which is associated here with the vague name for this character. Then, two measures later, Emperor Qin inverts the missing major second to complete the motive when he sings the name Jian-li twice separated by the interval of a minor seventh. Of interesting note is that the two names assigned this character are both sung using different parts of the shadow motive strengthening the musical association between Gao Jian-li and his motive. As the second scene continues, the conflict between Gao Jian-li and Emperor Qin arises over how their mother died. We learn that Jian-li blames Qin for their mother’s death. Scene two closes with an orchestral intermezzo accompanied by the same vocalizations written for the chorus at the beginning of the opera found previously in Figure 3.3.

⁷⁴ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 50. mm.114-115.

The third scene becomes more intimate bringing Yue-yang and Jian-li together in Jian-li's chamber. Soon, Yue-yang's feelings for Jian-li become clear as she asks her father's permission to seduce him— in part to elicit the anthem from him, and in part for personal reasons, as we discover from her text “I want this musician.”⁷⁵ Jian-li has not been eating in an attempt to kill himself, and Yue-yang successfully uses her seductive powers to get him to eat. The romance between Yue-yang and Jian-li is, to this point, approved by and at the behest of the Emperor in attempts to preserve Jian-li's life and get the anthem he so desires. However, the seduction is carried to its furthest end resulting in two things: the miraculous healing of Yue-yang's legs, and provoking the rage of the Emperor that Jian-li has spoiled his daughter whom he promised to General Wang. Tan Dun writes this scene by broadening his compositional palate with music of the seduction.

At the start of Act I scene 3, Tan's orchestration is quite romantic. He relies heavily on the strings with the help of the winds to create a soft timbre beginning the seduction. As Yue-yang sings, her banal chatter about the weather quickly turns romantic with such images in the text as “handsome snowflakes,” “falling through my fingers,” and “the glowing fire.”⁷⁶ Yue-yang's romantic images combined with Tan's orchestration create an intimate opening to the scene. The *moderato* at measure sixty-eight interrupts Yue-yang's attempted seduction as the Emperor enters inquiring about the status of Jian-li. Tan quickly changes the syllabic setting opening the scene to a melismatic one in Yue-yang's romantic imagery, then back to a more syllabic one with which Emperor Qin sings

⁷⁵ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 67-68. mm. 124-130.

⁷⁶ Ibid. pp. 61-62. mm. 13-45.

in this entrance, which also contributes to the change of mood. Further helping the dramatic shift for the Emperor's entrance in this scene is the composer's change of orchestration which thickens to include more brass than before. The tempo change to *moderato* and the syllabic text setting remain consistent until the Emperor leaves Yue-yang to return to her seduction with the words, "I leave him to you."⁷⁷ Tan gives a tempo indication which slows at measure 148 which allows the text to be more prominent.

The tempo slightly increases at measure 159 as the orchestration— with more strings accompanied by woodwinds— returns the listener to the romantic mood with which the scene begins. In another musically intriguing moment, Tan writes contrapuntally between Yue-yang and the viola from measures 180 through 188 perhaps to intensify the Princess's seductive strategy. In these measures, the voice and viola are a canon whose rhythm is somewhat disguised to account for Yue-yang's text. The canonic writing is rhythmically displaced by 4 measures with Yue-yang's entrance at the pickup to measure 181, and the viola entering in beat two of measure 185. The Princess's entrance begins on a C, and the viola imitates at the fourth beginning on F. Tan ends the canonic writing quickly at measure 188 with an open fifth (an F and a C) suggesting an imperfect authentic cadence. This canonic section is included as Figure 3.11 below.

⁷⁷ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 69. mm.151-152.

70

The First Emperor
Act I, Scene 3

Entry with
YUEYANG: rhythmic changes for vocal syllables

180 E

YY. *p* Sage of mu-sic, the Sha-dow that fol-lows my fa-ther, do you

185

YY. hear the snow flut-ter-ing? Why keep your lips sealed

mp dolce *mf* *mp*

solo vi.

Entry

189

YY. like a stub-born oy-ster?

mf *hp.* *mp*

Più mosso (♩ = 112)

194

YY. You must pi-ty me.

f *mf* *p* *f*

repeat

full theme solo quartet

imitative writing

(Revised 9/1/07)

Figure 3.11 Canonic imitation between the Princess and the viola.

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After the canon, a string quartet accompanies the Princess as she continues her ploys to get Jian-li to eat. Of interesting note is the way the composer connects the canon and the string quartet. The quartet begins with a full statement of the entry theme in the first violin; but only imitative writing follows. This can also be seen in Figure 3.11.

Other musical devices contributing to the seductive atmosphere of Act I, scene 3 include the vocal extras Tan writes in this scene. We find the Princess singing her first trill and ornament in measure 229, and again in measure 231. The indication for these measures is a *glissando* up and down followed by a trill. These two ornaments follow measures of recitative and, while interpretation and dramatic impetus is the charge of the performer, these particular ornaments are clearly intended to be sensual. Yue-yang's text threaded through these ornaments is, "Never before did youth torment me so. Here in winter's deepest white. I come with plum blossoms in my hair. Ah... O soft spring shower, this lotus flower opens shy, thirsty for your sweet wine. Never have I tasted such a delicious hour."⁷⁸ Throughout this text, Tan writes many of these sensual *glissandi*. As Jian-li begins warming to the Princess their vocal lines become more similar. Note the similar melodic material shared between the two in measures 283-284 and 291-292. This sharing of musical material signifies their unity and is furthered in measures 308-315. In measures 308-311 Yue-yang begins a sentence with the specific melodic contour of an ascending second, an ascending third, an ascending fifth, a descending third, and finally a descending second. Jian-li finishes the sentence using the exact same melodic contour as the Princess only a fourth higher. Then, in measures 312-315 the two sing together, first in harmony, then, in measures 314-315, in unison octaves. This unison is the musical

⁷⁸ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 72-73. mm. 228-243.

depiction of the complete physical unity of the Princess, Yue-yang, and the Shadow, Gao Jian-li. To intensify the scene, the Princess's first sexual experience and climax is represented by waterphones which, the score indicates are played by Three Spirits representing lust.⁷⁹

Upon the indication in the score at measure 331 that the Princess gets up and walks gingerly (a miracle that she walks as her legs have been paralyzed), Tan writes much of her following vocal line over an F dominant seventh chord. Perhaps the most powerfully suggestive sonority in all of music, the dominant seventh chord in measure 331 is paired with a striking and dissonant B natural in the vocal line. This juxtaposition creates a very thick tension possibly attributable, at first, to the preceding events. However, as the scene continues, the dominant seventh harmony never truly resolves and Emperor Qin learns of both the miracle with which he is ecstatic, and his daughter's loss of innocence by which he is enraged.

The Shaman enters the scene at the discovery of the healing and sings the name, Shadow,⁸⁰ once more for which Tan, again, employs the shadow motive. At measure 344 The Shaman sings a transformed version of the motive (two ascending tritons) which is then simplified into only one ascending tritone per iteration of the name in measures 345-347. At measure 357 The Shaman's vocal line centers on fifths, fourths, and seconds like the original shadow motive, but this time represents the transformed version of the musical material (tritone) perhaps representing the text. Shaman sings the words,

⁷⁹ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score . pp. 79. mm. 316.

⁸⁰ Ibid. pp. 80-81. mm. 343-347.

“Shadows are indeed passing over the plain... Shadow.”⁸¹ Her statement implies that Jian-li’s influence, be it good or bad, is spreading. Thus, as The Shaman discusses the spreading of Shadow, the shadow motive transforms as well. This example is found in Figure 3.12.

Transformation of "shadow" motive

355

Sh. Sha - dows in - deed are pass - ing o - ver the plain....

ob. mp

358

Sh. Sha - dow,

YY. I can run....

Emp. EMPEROR: Yue - yang, this is...

[The CHIEF MINISTER returns with the EMPEROR and the YIN-YANG MASTER, followed by GENERAL WANG.]

fl. cl.

mf

3 3 3 3

(Revised 9/1/07)

Figure 3.12 The transformation of the shadow motive reflecting the discussion of the influence of the shadow spreading.

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⁸¹ Ibid. pp. 81. mm. 356-559.

The forgiving General expresses his willingness to continue his relationship with the Princess by singing a reiteration of the music that first he sang to her in Act I, scene 1, pages 32-33, measures 354-368 wherein they were initially promised to each other. This musical and textual return reveals the unwavering and forgiving General's character through music. Tan Dun's brushstroke in musically characterizing General Wang in such a way creates a sympathetic character for whom the audience pulls, and for whom the audience might also feel embarrassed due to the infidelity of Yue-yang. As the General expresses himself to Yue-yang, the melody with which he sings her name is another interesting variation of the shadow motive found in Figure 3.13. The composer changes the motive making the first interval a major third, then separating the two halves of the motive with an ascending major second like in the original version, and finally ending the four note motive with a descending augmented fourth.

Figure 3.13 is a musical score snippet from Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*. It features a vocal line for the General (labeled 'Gen.') and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins at measure 398 with the lyrics 'cuc - kold's name. Shame! Shame! Be-lov-ed Yue - yang--'. The piano part includes various dynamics such as *f*, *mp*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, *sf*, and *ppp*. A handwritten note 'alteration of 4-note motive' is placed above the final four notes of the vocal line, which are 'Yue - yang--'. The score is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature.

Figure 3.13 The final version of the shadow motive.

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Ultimately, the use of the four note “shadow” motive here marks the General's recognition of the bond between Yue-yang and Jian-li, and the radical transformation of it could represent the General's desire to conquer that bond, or the ultimate unity chosen by

Yue-yang and Jian-li. Whichever interpretation suits the analyst, one thing is clear— Tan Dun has recognized the change in relationships at this point in the opera and writes music reflecting those changes.

Having healed Yue-yang's legs, taken her innocence, and enraged both Emperor Qin and General Wang, Gao Jian-li is warned numerous times by the Shaman, "Shadow, beware of the sun."⁸² Though the reference to the sun seems vague at this point, General Wang's desire to be with Princess Yue-yang has been expressed in terms ("Like grassland waking to daylight, I rise for you")⁸³ allowing the possibility that the General is the sun to whom the Shaman refers. Another possibility is that the sun is a reference to the Emperor himself. To this point, the warning remains somewhat vague. Ignoring the warning, the Princess and Jian-li sing again in musical unity. Their lines beginning at measure 462 (immediately after the warning) are a similar canonic writing to the earlier passage. The imitative melody and rhythm envelope their text, "Like water/fire an eternal pair locked in love's embrace, we are bound together by Heaven's grace." With its official end in measure 469 on Yue-yang's Bb, the canonic lines turn quickly into unison singing possibly showing that the Princess and Jian-li are even more united in the face of General Wang's attack on Jian-li for the misdeed.

In a climactic closing, Act I sees the return of the Yin-Yang Master delivering his allegorical "I told you so" in the same Peking Opera style which began the act. With the dramatic tension at its thickest thus far, Tan ends the Act I on the F dominant harmony

⁸² Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 86-90. mm. 426-429, 452-461.

⁸³ Ibid. pp. 84-85. mm. 404-409.

which never resolved itself prior and was used to extend the drama. Though this compositional device might most clearly be labeled a half cadence, in this context, the dominant seventh harmony is so prolonged that it seems to have both a sense of rest and tension. In this way, Tan may be using the chord to mirror the characters' relationships: Yue-yang and Jian-li are content together whereas their contentment has provoked the Emperor and General. Also reflected by the dominant seventh chord ending the act is the state of affairs. Emperor Qin asks for Jian-li's head, then immediately revokes the request since Jian-li has not composed the anthem.⁸⁴ Though the act ends on as simple a chord as a half cadence, it effectively symbolizes the drama and propels the piece towards Act II.

A modern curtain tune begins Act II which seems to mark the passage of time. The first four phrases each have a written in *accelerando* due to their rhythm. In spite of their thin texture, measures eleven through twenty-one may suggest the expansion of the Empire and Great Wall as the melodies therein take up much musical space emerging directly from the repeated A filling measure eleven. Once the curtain opens, Tan luxuriates in the F dominant seventh harmony from Act I to correspond with the building of the Great Wall, and the music lesson happening between Jian-li and Yue-yang. Again the two share melodic material suggesting their continued relationship. Juxtaposed with the bliss of these two is the hackneyed state of the workers on the Wall. The Shaman sings, also sharing melodic material with the Yue-yang/Jian-li melody, indicating the cost of building the wall in terms of human lives. That the Shaman sings of this great cost using the same melody with which Jian-li and Yue-yang open the act is an interesting

⁸⁴ Tan Dun. *The First Emperor*. Perusal score. pp. 92-93. mm. 493-513. Emperor Qin states, "Kill him." Then, just as the General is about to kill Jian-li, the Emperor commands him to stop, explaining "He must live to compose my anthem."

juxtaposition. On one hand (Jian-li/Yue-yang) the music represents wonder and a loving relationship, then on the other hand (Shaman) the same melody represents loss and physical exertion. Perhaps this duality is Tan's hand communicating the unification of the empire in spite of the different things going on simultaneously inside of it. As the piece winds on, the conflict over love is resolved in a nod to Romeo and Juliet adding another layer of intertextuality. Yue-yang commits suicide since her father, the Emperor, forces her to be with General Wang. She cannot endure life without Jian-li, neither can he endure life without Yue-yang, so he seeks revenge on Emperor Qin by biting off his own tongue bringing about his own death and his inability to sing the anthem. Jian-li's revenge is furthered as the ghost of General Wang returns explaining that Jian-li murdered him. The final coronation, for which all of these sacrifices were made, is a bitter one. Qin declares himself China's first Emperor; however, he does so with the realization of the pyrrhic nature of his ascent. His final expectation, the anthem for which he kept Jianli alive and lost his daughter and his General, is revealed as another act of revenge. Jian-li uses the slaves' song from the building of the Great Wall as China's national anthem exacting his revenge by reminding the Emperor of his personal loss, the loss sustained by the slaves, and the loss of Jian-li's mother (who was like a mother to Emperor Qin) at the Emperor's hand.

The double suicide ending the lovers' triangle, the use of a screenplay as source material, and the incorporation of prominent figures from the film industry in this production are all parts of Tan Dun's *The First Emperor* which make it intertextual cinemopera. Further, the addition of Eastern and water instruments to the orchestra

stretches the intertextuality of the work to the level of exoticism, as does the juxtaposition of the Chinese and English languages, the incorporation of the Peking opera style, and some of the compositional devices employed such as the use of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale. For all of the above reasons, Tan Dun's opera, *The First Emperor* is a clear example of the cinemopera subcategory which seems, thus far, to please audiences if not critics.

CHAPTER 4: Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*: A Film Composer writes Opera

The Little Prince shares commonalities with *The First Emperor* and *Lost Highway* in that while its source material is not as directly related to film as Olga Neuwirth's opera, *Lost Highway*, the people who brought the opera to fruition are. Rachel Portman is, like Tan Dun, a very prominent film composer having scored such films as *Home Fries* (1998), *The Cider House Rules* (1999), *The Legend of Bagger Vance* (2000), *Chocolate* (2000), *The Emperor's New Clothes* (2001), *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), *The Manchurian Candidate* (2004), and most recently, *The Lake House* (2006), and *The Duchess* (2008) to name some of her most prominent scores.⁸⁵ *The Little Prince*, a children's opera, is based on the 1943 French work, *Le Petite Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry which was adapted into a libretto by playwright Nicholas Wright. *The Little Prince* saw its auspicious premiere at Houston Grand Opera in 2003 to much critical acclaim. The Houston Chronicle hailed it saying:

In its latest world premiere— the 27th— Houston Grand Opera has tackled one of the genre's trickiest tasks: translating into musical form a book the entire world seems to know. With the aid of stage director Francesca Zambello, playwright Nicholas Wright and the set designer Maria Bjornson, Portman has brought *The Little Prince* tantalizingly close to a major operatic success...

⁸⁵ Amazon.com. The Internet Movie Database. (Accessed 12 June, 2010),
<<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0783233>>

... At the premiere Saturday in the Wortham Theater Center's Cullen Theater, Portman's *The Little Prince* was unfailingly attractive—simple, communicative, touching.

The music was unrelentingly appealing. Bjornson's designs repeatedly provoked the child in the overwhelmingly adult audience, which chuckled at her whimsical treatment of the volcanoes and baobabs on the Prince's tiny star, and the hunters, Fox, Snake and other characters he meets on his journey through the solar system. Zambello's staging reflected the cunning skill of a director whose work ranges from opera to television to Disneyworld.

The great strength of Portman's work lay in Wright's fabulous libretto. While faithfully following the outline of the original, leisurely flowing story, he skillfully transformed it into taut scenes and striking verse. Wright's work clearly inspired Portman. In scene after scene she wrote compelling vocal music—arias for the Pilot, the Little Prince and other characters; smoothly contoured ensembles for the children's chorus portraying the birds that guided the prince from planet to planet; and stirring ensembles to close each of the two acts.

Wright and Portman found the right balance between sentiment and seriousness...

Portman's music had all the craftsmanship and beauty of her best film scores...⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Houston Grand Opera. (Accessed 20 June, 2010), < <http://www.houstongrandopera.org> >

In terms of its construction, *The Little Prince* is organized as a simple number opera where each scene has a clear beginning and end, and all of the arias and ensembles are closed forms. What is of particular interest is how Portman links these numbers together. In film scores, the music is written to synchronize exactly with what is happening on screen. It enhances the tone, action, and characterization by so doing. Portman's transitions in *The Little Prince* from one number to the next are similar to a film score in their minimal and fast nature; they are abrupt. Tempo changes, harmonic changes, and meter changes occur with great frequency and while they are often unprepared, they also flow smoothly as a result of their pairing with the drama in time much like a film score.

Portman begins her opera with an introductory aria, an operatic staple, in which we meet one of the main characters, the Pilot. His aria halts with the authentic cadence going from measure fifty to fifty-one, then, at measure fifty-three Portman uses changes in key, meter, and tempo to definitively close the aria and "transition" suddenly like a film score might. Further, her score indicates that measure fifty-three begins Scene 1 of Act I. Stars (the children's chorus) appear and sing to narrate, set the nighttime scene, and philosophize, "Every star a tiny wishing well, Every wish a song we sing, Every song a tiny planet that we whirl upon a string."⁸⁷ Portman's opera continues as a strict number opera throughout. In much the same way as the previously described transition, the opera moves from number to number with a significant amount of musical change over the span of a few measures at most. Though Portman's score abides by typical forms and common

⁸⁷ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 11, mm. 79-87.

practice harmony, it is also clearly representative of her unique compositional style, particularly in film music.

While not unprecedented in opera, *The Little Prince* is rife with tempo changes and indications; and, in some cases is done so independently of text, character, and drama. These tempo changes create rapid musical shifts which Portman does her best to mask or ease sometimes using *ritards* and *accelerandos*, but even these hardly seem subtle. Further, her tempo indications are quite exact much like those in Puccini's scores. However, Portman's tempo changes are much less organic than Puccini's in that they do not seem to be motivated by the sweeping vocal lines that give Puccini's tempo changes their musical impetus. Nonetheless, Portman's tempo changes are clear and purposeful serving to mark important musical events such as a new number or formal section, or to distinguish between characters in a scene. Still other instances of tempo changes in *The Little Prince* seem only to serve characterization. As they enhance the drama, either directly or indirectly, one could easily associate Portman's tempo changes in this score with the same tool in her film scores.

For example, when the Little Prince asks the Pilot to draw a sheep, we find a short recitative section comprised of only eleven measures. In these eleven measures of recitative there are seven musical indications related to tempo, a technique used by film composers and opera composers (Puccini comes to mind again) alike. The Prince begins his request, "Please... Draw me a sheep."⁸⁸ in measure 202 with a tempo indication of 100 to the quarter note. Two measures later, the Pilot sings his reply at sixty-nine to the

⁸⁸ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 38. mm. 202.

quarter note where the tempo change is made more gradual by a *rallentando*. Portman's attempt to make this transition aurally subtle works, but the audience still has the perception that the Pilot sings much slower than the Prince. An interpretive explanation of this tempo change might suggest that the Pilot is adult, more patient, and slower moving than the young and eagerly curious Prince. As the eleven measure recitative continues, the Pilot's response is accompanied by the indication *pochissimo accelerando* which leads directly to the tempo indication of seventy-six to the quarter note in measure 206 at which point the Prince again asks the Pilot to draw him a sheep. In perhaps the most jarring tempo change, Portman jumps from seventy-six to 126 to the quarter note for the Prince's next sudden question in measure 208 when he asks, "What's that thing?" This tempo change is both unprepared and largely the charge of the singer as it is unaccompanied. Again, examining the score for interpretive explanations of tempo changes holds that the Prince's second question is one about which he is more excited and curious than before, so Portman may be reflecting this child's increasing curiosity by speeding the tempo to its fastest pace yet in the scene. Then the Pilot's agitated response stays in the rigorous tempo which slows using a *rallentando* in measure 212 to prepare for the Pilot's upcoming aria.

An interesting tempo transition from 126 to 138 to the quarter note, the *rallentando* in measure 212 actually slows the tempo prior to the beginning of the aria which starts in the faster of the two tempos. This counterintuitive transition (slowing into a faster tempo) works due to how sparse the musical material is just before the aria. The music written for the *rallentando* is monophonic in texture and spans only four beats of

the six four measure. As the Pilot's aria begins, the tempo immediately launches into the new tempo of 138 to the quarter note. Again we will look towards the tempo serving the text and character as justification for sudden changes. The Prince asks the Pilot about his plane and what it does. This aria is the Pilot's excited response in which he describes flying and traveling as well as his exhilarated perspective on it. Portman sets up the Pilot's exuberance for flying in measure 212 by slowing the tempo just before the tempo increases for the aria. A direct tempo change here would not be much of an increase thus failing to convey the Pilot's perspective on flying, so the composer slows then immediately starts the aria in a new, faster tempo. Despite their intricacy, Portman's aggressive and prevalent tempo indications are effective in this recitative and into the aria, and seem to reveal characterization.

Another transition revealing Portman's craft is found in measures fifty-two through fifty-three where the Pilot's introduction aria ends and the children's chorus begins. To move from one number to the next, the rhythmic figure changes quite abruptly/ The aria closes on a B major chord and the tonality is closely linked, moving to the dominant F sharp major for the chorus. It is this tonal relationship which gives the listener a sense of continuity between scenes. While the overall transition is not too musically drastic, it is both fast and angular in spite of its close tonal relationship. The aria ends accompanied by steady eighth notes, and the chorus maintains the same composite rhythm, but with syncopation that accents the offbeat of the first beat in measures fifty-three through eighty-six. While difficult to criticize due to its effectiveness, the syncopation is not prepared. The Pilot's aria which directly precedes the chorus,

while rhythmically intricate for an idiomatic text setting, does not introduce any syncopations or rhythmic shifts so that we might expect it when it happens. The syncopation embedded in the first chorus simply appears as a sudden change to announce that the children's chorus is beginning. This change, while effective, is an unprepared one reminiscent of an immediate musical change in a film score and can be seen in Figure 4.1.

poco a poco rall.

51 *dim.* *mf* *mp*

Pilot

night-ly con-ver-sa - tion.

Scene 1

The Stars appear

53 **8** **Allegro e molto ritmico** ♩ = 126 *mf*

Stars
(Children's
Chorus)

Light your

Light your

Light your

sempre ritmico

mf

Figure 4.1 The unprepared incorporation of syncopation.

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Given that Portman's compositional acclaim is so strongly associated with her film scores, it is important to examine music in *The Little Prince* which may be cinematic in ways other than quick transitions. Described as writing "lush, nudgy music"⁸⁹ Portman writes an orchestral representation of a sunset and sunrise in Act I, scene 2, which was likely familiar turf for this film composer. As a concrete example of cinematic music in *The Little Prince*, let us examine the music Portman writes in the sunset and sunrise scene for its cinematic features. Just prior to the sunset which begins (not coincidentally) at measure 360, the Little Prince sings about sunsets on his planet in the key of G minor. He states that he is sad and sunsets cheer him up.⁹⁰ Portman abruptly modulates to G major at measure 360, presumably to prepare the sunset. The shape of the sun is circular, and is perhaps represented by the measure number 360 as there are 360 degrees in a circle. In addition to this clever occurrence, Portman may be musically painting the color of the sun *via* the abrupt key change to G major. As her sunset music begins, Portman writes her sun theme with a gently ascending arpeggio of a G major tonic chord which is quickly decorated with the F sharp and E natural in measure 361 both of which resolve in the following measure. Portman almost suggests a B minor harmony with a four three suspension in these measures of decoration which foreshadow the first actual harmony change in the sunset music discussed in the following paragraph. The pattern of a tonic chord in G major for one measure followed by the sixth and seventh scale degrees in the next measure continues for four cycles (eight measures). In the third and fourth cycle of this pattern, Portman further garnishes the G major arpeggio

⁸⁹ Bert Cardullo. "Women and Children First." *The Hudson Review*. Volume 54, no. 4. pp. 644. Cardullo reviews Portman's score for the film *Ratcatcher*, and describes her larger scale film scores as referenced above.

⁹⁰ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 55, mm. 358-359. The Little Prince states, "Sunsets are wonderful when you're feeling sad."

with soaring *sostenuto* members of the tonic harmony. However, this *sostenuto* chord spans less than two measures before Portman alters it so that our ears perceive the need for resolution—possibly suggesting the resolution of a day a sunset represents. The F sharp in measure 365 resolves in the next bar displaced in a lower octave, imitating what the composer has previously stated in the opening arpeggiated melody, but with more simplicity. The measure number may be significant here as well since there are 365 days in one year, each of which resolve. By decorating the tonic chords with the aforementioned suspensions, Portman may be suggesting the feeling of resolution in a day when the sun sets, much like she might in a film.

As previously mentioned, the suspension figures in the first eight measures of the sunset music foreshadow the first official change in harmony to B minor. In the key of G major, B minor is a tonic substitute, so this change in harmony is neither drastic nor functional in a hierarchical sense, but colorful—like a sunset. Portman may be using this color change in measure 369 to reflect the shades of color in the sky when the sun sets. Thus far, the composer has used suspensions and a very closely related change in harmony as though it were a musical painting whose color slowly morphs like that of a sunset.

Measures 369 through 371 continue in the key of G major, and alternate between tonic and mediant harmonies, the gesture of which could be another musical brush stroke by Portman representing the sunset since all harmonic changes thus far are tonic substitutes. In these three measures, the passing tones (E in measure 369 and measure

371) could again be a musical symbol of the resolution brought to a day by the sunset. Hence, it seems that the composer may be using gentle harmonic shifts and suspensions to portray both the myriad colors in the sky and the feeling of repose a sunset brings.

Following the gently dissonant passing tone in measures 369 through 371, the sunset's imperceptible movement could be suggested by a coloristic harmonic progression (or retrogression in some of the chord changes) which changes once per measure starting at measure 371: iii - IV9 – iii6 - ii - iii (for two measures) - ii - iii, then finally measures 379 and 380 see an authentic cadence. At measure 380, Portman recalls the opening sunset music with identical harmonic structure but less frequent non-chord tones, perhaps indicating that the sun is now setting. To make musical space for the longer cadence at measures 393 and 394, Portman makes use of the same harmonies as at the beginning of the sunset music, but cuts short the harmonic progression in measures 380 through 394, with an authentic cadence spanning measures 392 through 394. This cadence likely represents the actual setting of the sun, for Portman indicates the music that follows is sunrise music.

Measure 394 marks the most significant musical change in the sunset number. For the first time, a simple melody and accompaniment is used to represent the sunrise. This symbolic music is two repetitions of four measures. It is perhaps no coincidence that Portman quotes a segment of a hymn tune in her musical representation of the sunrise. Beat two of measure 394 through beat three of measure 396 is a direct quote of the hymn tune *Lobe den Herren*. As the vast majority of her sunrise melody quotes this hymn tune,

one could conclude that the composer's intent is to weave the religious and philosophical connotations of the original Saint-Exupéry text into the music symbolizing the sunrise.

To examine this musical fusion, see Figure 4.2.

The image displays a musical score for piano, spanning measures 391 to 404. The score is written for both the right and left hands on a grand staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The music begins at measure 391 with a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The dynamic is marked *mf* (warmly). A *rall.* (rallentando) marking is present above the staff. A section break is indicated by a double bar line and the text *—DE [54] Pochis. più mosso ♩ = 108*. The music continues with various dynamics including *mp*, *quasi f*, and *con Ped.* (con Pedal). The tempo and mood shift to *più mosso* at measure 395. The score includes several slurs and phrasing marks. At measure 401, the dynamic is *f*. At measure 404, the music concludes with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking. The overall character is contemplative and serene, reflecting the sunrise theme mentioned in the text.

Figure 4.2. The sunrise music which incorporates melodic material from *Lobe den Herren*.

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Moreover, Portman develops this melody by loosely inverting it upon the third and fourth statements of it, as well as truncating it and altering the harmonies underneath of it as perhaps, a musical indication of the diversity of the religious and philosophical ideas embedded in Saint-Exupéry's text. In the first two statements (measures 394-401), the melody is accompanied by either tonic harmonies, or the typical tonic substitutes of iii or vi, whereas the developed statements of the sunrise melody in measures 402 through 406 are accompanied by subdominant-functioning harmonies of either IV or ii which not only develop the sunrise melody, but help drive to the cadence at measures 407 and 408.

The final cadence of the sunset number could be considered Portman's most indicative and film-like musical painting. Measures 407 and 408 are a half cadence in G major followed by a retrogression to a subdominant-functioning ii chord in measure 409. The half cadence might point towards the morning sun as a symbol of the day's beginning which promises to continue. Further, Portman's retrogression into measure 409 creates a cyclic musical figure which could be dramatically interpreted as the cycle of a day. Though it may be argued that composers have used common theoretical devices and harmonic hierarchy to communicate with their audiences for centuries, much like Portman does here, few do so in a way as reminiscent of a film score as is done with the sunset number. For instance, the harmonic language is extremely basic but not monochromatic. The tonic and subdominant harmonies are both enhanced with simple substitutes throughout this number creating coloristic harmonies which may be interpreted as the sunset's colors. Further, cadences in this number serve an incredibly interpretive purpose more so than a formal one. For example, the extension of the

dominant chord to two measures just prior to the sunrise could represent nighttime, and the half cadence at measure 407 may represent the movement into daytime. More evidence of the interpretive function of cadences can be found in measure 409 whose retrogression likely represents the cycle of a day as previously discussed. Both Portman's use of color changes and symbolic cadences make the sunset number quite similar to a film score.

Further evidence of the similarities between *The Little Prince* and a film score is found upon examination of the Baobab scene. This number, while cinematic in rudiments, involves singing, the incorporation of which separates it from the sunset number previously discussed. The three note ascending motive which pervades and begins the Baobab scene could represent the Baobab tree and its growth upward from the land and can be seen in Figure 4.3.



Figure 4.3 The Baobab three-note motive

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As the Baobabs begin singing in measure 516, the audience learns that they are growing up from seeds.⁹¹ The ascending motive is then developed and used in the vocal lines in this number, the details of which will be discussed later. The undeveloped motive returns in the orchestra in measures 524, 525, 544, 545, 561, 562, 565, and 566 which could represent the growth of the Baobabs while they simultaneously sing about it. It then returns again at the end of the number in measures 596 through 606 after which the Little Prince exclaims, “There! That’s the last one gone.”⁹² The Little Prince has picked all of the Baobabs out of the ground, and the motive representing them fades and dies out with

⁹¹ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 68, mm. 516-522.

⁹² Ibid. pp. 77. mm. 608-609.

a written measure of silence in measure 607 indicating the Little Prince's triumph over the Baobabs seen in Figure 4.4 below.

Act I 77

He pulls the last sprout out.
molto rall. 80 **Pochiss. meno mosso** ♩ = 200

Prince *mf*

There! That's the last one gone. It's

mp

Silence *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

Last Baobab motive

Figure 4.4 The final Baobab motive

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This particular scene is steeped with chromatically ascending vocal lines which are a development of the three note ascending motive. Measures 518, 522, 530, 534, 538, 539, 542, 543, 553, 554, 557, 558, 573, 574, 577, 578, and 583 through 585 all show prevalence and significance of the ascending line in this scene as well as clearly developing the initial Baobab motive. Again in this scene, Portman has relied on simple compositional techniques to communicate the story and represent the characters therein. However, she again does so in cinematic scope as previously evinced in the sunset scene. Already representing an expansion of the original motive, when the Baobabs begin singing the motive in measures 518 and 522 is now four notes ascending. The kind of planing Portman uses in the voice leading here is very atypical of an operatic score, but effective in deliberately developing the Baobab motive to likely represent their real-time growth through upward planing. Note that the motive is presented at a *mezzo piano*

dynamic while the Baobabs' text explains their sleeping and dreaming habits. Then, at measure 536 the dynamic level is *forte* and the tempo hastens showing the kind of abrupt changes making this score similar to film music. Portman further develops the Baobab motive in the verse which begins "wake, wake with a jump." Here in measures 538-539 and 542-543, by extending the rising planing figure over two measures, the Baobab motive is developed *via* elongation. The *forte* verse of this scene reveals yet another development of the Baobabs' music when the vocal line leaps up in measure 537. Not only does this leap paint the text "jump," it is also a more severe version of the Baobab motive because in this form it ascends over a larger interval than the original third, and does so in less musical space- two notes rather than three. This staunch development of the Baobab motive could represent the Baobabs coming into their largest and most ferocious state. Portman furthers the development of this motive again by extending the ascent to two measures in measures 538 - 539, 542 - 543, 553 - 554, and 557 - 558 rather than the previous one measure ascent, making this the most drastic development of the length of the Baobab motive thus far. Portman develops the original Baobab motive again at the *poco piu mosso* in measure 559 when the vocal lines change from a straight ascent to a descent followed by an ascent possibly symbolic of the full development of the Baobabs who are now able to use their roots⁹³ in addition to their height as power. Musically, the composer alters the original three note ascending Baobab motive to suit the character changes throughout the scene. It is clear that Portman's employment of the Baobab motive and how she develops it is both economical and cinematic, using it to suit the exact moment of the scene. The characters and the musical motive change

⁹³ The libretto reads, "Now we stretch each muscle and sinew. Big and bad! Now we stick our roots right in you. Big and bad. Ha ha ha!"

simultaneously just as music is written to match real time changes in a film. Thus the Baobab scene clearly shows an additional significant similarity to film music.

At times in Portman's score, her writing incorporates both elements of cinemopera: unique transitions, and cinematic music written specifically to characterize. As the Prince's journey begins, he travels to different planets where each contains a different character with which the Prince may interact. Portman represents each planet and character thereon in a musically exclusive way, thus characterizing them through her score. This compositional technique draws upon the traditions established by Wagner who used leitmotifs to accomplish the same goal. Moreover, Portman's musical characterizations are another element of *The Little Prince* shared with film music in that film music sometimes seeks to characterize people and places in the same manner as Rachel Portman does in the planets' sections of her score. From planet to planet, the audience hears music composed specifically for that planet and the characters thereon, as well as cinematic transitions from one planet to the next drawing both aforementioned concepts linked to film music together.

The first planet to which the Prince travels is the planet of the King. The key of B flat minor begins abruptly at measure 1103, and the King's opening phrases center on a descent to B flat and end on an authoritative cadence fitting for a King. For example, measures 1119 through 1127 contain the text, "The world is full of many different things and all are subject to the will of kings. Every person, every beast and flower owes

allegiance to my awesome power.”⁹⁴ This phrase descends to the tonic, B flat, arriving *via* a simple and effective authentic cadence. However, when the Prince questions the King’s power, the King’s phrases begin to center more around the dominant of F, and in so doing, musically demonstrate that the King on this planet may be less powerful than he leads on. The phrase in which the King explains that his General cannot turn into a butterfly on command drops to and ends on an F in stark contrast to the previous phrases explaining the King’s power which end on B flat, the tonic. Again, Portman leaves the King musically powerless in measure 1173 by featuring the F rather than the B flat.

Prior to measure 1173, the King explains that he commands things to happen that would happen already anyway. Then, in measure 1173, when the King has explained that he will command the sun to set at its natural setting time he states, “I sway the sun, and plenty else besides” the composer writes repeated low F’s for the King at the end of the phrase. This half cadence leaves the King without power and is resolved by the Prince when he decides to leave. At measure 142, the Prince states, “Your Majesty, I think that I should go.” the King’s half cadence is resolved to B flat by the Prince. The King’s reply sees a return to his false sense of power both textually and musically. Commanding the Prince, “You may not leave!” he then orders, “Well if you’re on your way I order you to leave without delay” cadencing on B flat to indicate that his power, while not real may still be effective. Having returned full circle musically, and explained the false power of the King on his planet, Portman takes the Prince to the next planet, that of the Vain Man.

⁹⁴ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 123, measures 117-127.

On the planet of the Vain Man we find a vocal line full of arpeggios, some of which are played on kazoo. Every phrase whether sung or played on kazoo by the Vain Man is an arpeggio which musically characterizes him. The Vain Man deeply desires to have everyone's approval and attention. His need restricts him to do, act, and sing to attract the attention of others. His vocal line is therefore restricted to arpeggiated lines. The obvious parallel is that the strictly controlled vocal line likely symbolizes the Vain Man's need for approval and the personal restriction thereof. In addition to the use of a kazoo for attention, Portman indicates in several places where the Vain Man should dance. His dance is easily interpreted as a ploy to seek the approval of others which the composer has added to Saint Exupéry's original story. The original text presents the Vain Man in chapter XI. Throughout the entire interaction and conversation of the Prince and the Vain Man, Saint Exupéry does not indicate that the Vain Man dances or that he plays a kazoo, only that he tips his hat to acknowledge attention.⁹⁵ As Rachel Portman has added the dancing and playing elements of this character, she enhances the visual affect of her opera in this scene quite directly. Saint Exupéry includes original artwork of each character in his story, and the Vain Man is not shown dancing nor does he have a kazoo.⁹⁶ Again, through her additions and modifications, Portman draws on her film music experience to create a more cinematic opera score than those which cannot be categorized as cinemopera.

The only phrases in the entire Vain Man scene which are not arpeggios are paired with the text, "admire me." The two statements of this phrase are both set with a still

⁹⁵ Antoine de Saint Exupéry. *Le Petit Prince*. Chapter XI. pp. 34-35. The original representation of the Vain Man does not refer to him dancing in either the text or the picture.

⁹⁶ Ibid. pp. 34.

limited melody; however, they are not as restricted as the arpeggios which the Vain Man uses to seek approval and attention because of their intervallic content which, for the first time in the Vain Man's music, includes seconds. This break away from an arpeggiated melody as the Vain Man sings, "admire me" is perhaps the composer's characterization that the only chance the Vain Man has at freedom from his vanity is to admit what he wants. Ironically, the vocal line ascends to a high C near the end of the scene⁹⁷ containing the last statement of "admire me." Though Portman has already provided vanity music using the strict arpeggios and the kazoo, she also provides this vanity high C to further characterize his desperation for attention. In this scene, it is clear that Rachel Portman adds to the cinematic scope of the score by the addition of dancing, a kazoo, and the vain and restrictive musical characterization of the Vain Man.

Though there is a short transition from planet to planet, each begins rather abruptly much like scene changes in a film. Act I, scene 8 is the planet of the Drunkard and the next planet on the Prince's voyage. It is marked with tight chromatic planing and contrary motion in the orchestra throughout and can be seen below in Figure 4.4.

⁹⁷ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 137. mm. 1271-1272.

Scene 8

The Prince arrives on the planet of the Drunkard

156

Molto legato ♩ = 92



Figure 4.5 Drunkard's music

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This planing and heavy chromaticism could act as a musical representation of the Drunkard's slurred perception of his planet, undoubtedly due to his constant inebriation. The harmony is somewhat obscured and distorted by all the chromatic movement. A clear symbol of impaired perception due to alcohol, Portman expands the chromatic movement from the orchestra into the vocal line. The Drunkard sings all of his phrases with notated *glissandi*. While the vocal line is not explicitly chromatic, the aesthetic result of the *glissandi* is both effective in characterizing the Drunkard, and developmental of the chromatic music which begins the scene and seemingly represents this planet. Portman's cleverness reveals itself as the audience realizes that each planet and character has distinct music.

As the Prince travels to the next planet on his journey, there is a brief transition which takes us to the Businessman. The Businessman is too busy to interact with the

Prince⁹⁸, and is musically represented as such. The vocal line has a rhythmic drive and syllabic text setting with few rests, clearly establishing a patter which centers on a D and has the feel of D minor. This patter makes it difficult for the Prince to interrupt or have a conversation. However, after the first rest lasting longer than a beat, the Prince says hello and is quickly squelched by the Businessman who returns to his work and his patter at measure 1342. As he returns to his work, the Prince further attempts to speak with him to no avail until finally at measure 1357 the Businessman asks the Prince a question. The two converse and arrive at a disagreement about the concepts of ownership and possession, and the Prince travels to the next planet.

Not coincidentally, Portman begins scene 10, the planet of the Lamplighter, with a key centered on D minor which comes directly from the beginning of the Businessman's music. This parallel is likely the composer's commentary, implying a similarity between the two characters. As we discover, both are busy people but for different reasons. The most immediate difference between the Lamplighter's scene and the Businessman's is that the Prince and the Lamplighter converse right away. The Lamplighter's music is quite sad though steady, and is comprised of, at first, not much more than perfect fourths and fifths. However, as the Prince learns more about the lamplighter and his sense of duty, the lamplighter's music begins to unfurl. The arioso in measure 1438 marks the most prominent melodic theme associated with the Lamplighter and begins in G minor. As the Lamplighter explains the orders by which he is bound in measures 1438 through 1447, he maintains the key and simple character of his music.

⁹⁸ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 145. mm. 1336-1341. The Business man states: "Drat! Drat! Who said that? I haven't got time to stop and chat. Don't disturb my concentration. Let me get on with my calculation. How can I conclude the matter if you pester me with chatter?"

Then, at the first morning on the planet, the Lamplighter's vocal line becomes quite lyric and beautiful as he sings "good morning."⁹⁹ After the lyric line written for "good morning" revealing the sincerity of the Lamplighter, he explains that he gets no rest because the planet spins so fast he must unceasingly light and darken the lamp. Then, at measure 1465, the Lamplighter sings "good evening sir" with a return to the beautiful ascending lyric line written for "good morning." Portman establishes a clear distinction between the Lamplighter's taxing duty and his warm personality by writing music of two different characters to represent them as separate entities in correspondence with the text. The composer seems to characterize the Lamplighter with a musical dichotomy representing his inner struggle between personal needs and his orders.

As the Prince observes the Lamplighter and the frequent sunsets on his planet, he is pleased.¹⁰⁰ For the first time in his visits to these many different planets and as a result of his satisfaction, he sings in duet with the Lamplighter. The duet begins at measure 1505 and the two comment on how lovely sunsets are. At the recommendation of the Lamplighter, and perhaps due to the Prince's positive assessment of him, the Prince decides to visit Earth next. As the Lamplighter's final phrase closes, the Pilot sings to introduce Earth's lamplighters in the form of a children's chorus which sets up the Act I finale. Portman's use of a children's chorus is an example of intertextuality in that many operas prior (*La Boheme*, *Street Scene*, *Dead Man Walking*, and *Tosca* to name a few) have used children's choruses. Extending the intertextuality of using children in opera, we discover that a boy soprano as a title character is also precided in Giancarlo

⁹⁹ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 159-160. mm. 1448-1454.

¹⁰⁰ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 166-167. mm. 1519-1523. The Prince states, "I'd love to stay and watch with you. I'm sorry you haven't room for two."

Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. For these associations, Portman's score is full of intertextuality and links to film music.

In examining Portman's transitions from one planet to the next, we find both the use of spare musical material for transitions, and brief, jilting musical changes. The nature of these transitions holds a previously discussed commonality with film music. Transitions from one planet to another are quite cinematic in both their suddenness and prominence. As the score flows from one planet and character to the next, Portman exhibits a wonderful sense of musical economy. Each planet is named by the children's chorus and the character occupying that planet is introduced by the Pilot. Dramatically, this unifies much of Act I. Musically, however, these transitions are short and often seem sudden in spite of their consistent occurrence. For the first planet, the birds, sung by the children's chorus, explain that the Prince goes to the planet of the King. Further, the Pilot explains, "the nearest asteroid contained a king seated on a majestic throne."¹⁰¹ Musically, once the birds and Pilot have introduced the planet, the key changes from F major to B flat minor, the meter changes from twelve eight to four four, and the texture of the score thins to a single accompaniment line which plays only between the phrases sung by the King. All of these changes happen across the barline between measures 1102 and 1103. Like previous scene changes, this musical transition is a fast one, however, the tonal relationship of tonic and minor four pastes these measures together and make an otherwise abrupt transition seem less so.

Measures 1184 through 1195 mark the movement to the planet of the Vain Man. Again, the composer describes the Vain Man using the Pilot, and announces the planet

¹⁰¹ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 121. mm. 1098-1102.

with the children's chorus. The eleven measures used to go from one planet to the next calls upon the music written to announce the Prince's journey found two scenes prior which consists of running eighth notes in twelve eight with a chordal accompaniment. Then, in measure 1195 Portman writes a *decrescendo* and a *fermata* to prepare the music she writes for the Vain Man and his planet. Transitioning across the barline again from six eight meter to four four, and immediately changing the orchestral accompaniment from running eighth notes to block chords, the composer has again quickly linked two otherwise unrelated sets of music by tonal relationship. Here, Portman carries G minor from the children's chorus and Pilot's description into the Vain Man's music which clearly arpeggiates G minor throughout. This is yet another example of a musical transition that could easily be found in a film.

An almost identical transition is found in going from the Vain Man's planet to that of the Drunkard. The music from both the announcement of the Prince's journey and the previous transition returns in twelve eight time, the Pilot describes the scene, and the children's chorus explains that the Prince has moved on. This time, Portman has cut the transition music from eleven measures to seven truncating it even further. As the Drunkard's music begins, it sees a change in meter and basic accompaniment, and maintains the tonality just as in the previous transition. The first two sets of musical changes from one planet to the next are identical except in length.

The Act I finale begins with a children's chorus which dovetails onto the Pilot's introduction of Earth's lamplighters. In typical operatic tradition, the finale sees the full

cast introduced. First, the tenors are added to the chorus, then the adult treble voices, then the basses and baritones terracing the full company into the finale. While the writing in the finale is rather cinematic, the use of the full company is quite traditional. Mozart's operas as well as those of many other composers show clear examples of the full company finale.

As the first Act closes, let us clearly note the similarities of *The Little Prince* to film music so that we can then elaborate further on these commonalities in Act II. The timing of film music is of the utmost importance. If a musical change is not timed exactly with the visual cue with which it is intended to be paired, the resulting musical misfire can render the change ineffective and disruptive. To that end, many musical changes in film music must be sudden and/or unprepared as they are slave to their visual cues resulting in tonality shifts with minimal preparation at best. The skill in writing film music lies in both timing, and writing the necessary sudden changes without bending the natural hierarchy of sound so much that these changes become a nuisance to the film. In Portman's opera, musical transitions are similar— sometimes angular and conspicuous. Not as criticism, but as a characteristic of cinemopera, musical transitions are often handled quite skillfully as film composers are perhaps influenced by the subordinate function of their music to other aspects of film including mood, visual, and intensity. Portman writes transitions using sudden changes in tempo, harmony and key, meter, and thematic material in *The little Prince* so that they are not jarring. This skillful navigation is one of the features that makes her score characteristic of cinemopera.

To continue the examination of how Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince* fits into the cinemopera subcategory, let us uncover examples of the cinematic features found in Act II. As the second act begins, Portman echoes Act I by opening with storytelling by the Pilot. This time, however, his music is quickly interrupted by the children's chorus (Birds) whose narration is a direct quote of the Act I transition music which took the Prince from one planet to another. The birds announce that the Prince has come to Earth creating musical unity between acts as Portman recycles the transition music to bring the Prince to Earth. The composer furthers her already established sense of musical economy through this recycling.

Act II is comprised of the Prince's experiences on Earth which are much more extensive due to the difference in size of the previous planets he has visited. In similar fashion to Act I, the structure of Act II realizes the Prince interacting with different characters where each new character or characters are only separated by brief transitional music, narrations by the Pilot, and a more conservative use of the children's chorus which is reserved for the finale and other large ensemble scenes (in Act II, they no longer need to announce travel to different planets). The Prince's first encounter on Earth is a Snake whose music is written much like that of the characters on the previous planets the Prince has visited in that it seems to directly characterize the Snake. The Snake's music which begins at measure sixty-two is among the most chromatic in the score, slithering through the key of D minor with a melody that gently rises and falls both visually on the page and musically in the ear. This likely depicts the physical movement of a snake. In their exchange, Portman writes distinct music for both the Prince and the Snake. The Prince's

music is much more angular and less chromatic than that of the Snake, and the Snake's melodies are quite chromatic which, again, may be imitating his movement. The composer further characterizes the Snake when his melody soars to its highest as he tells the Prince, "But I'm more powerful than a King's finger."¹⁰² Though the contour of the Snake's melody here is basically an ascent, it ascends in a significantly more chromatic way than any of the Prince's music in this scene maintaining their musical distinction in spite of the lack of contour differences as well as representing the Snake's perception of his power. Once the Prince questions the Snake's power (reminiscent of the King), the Snake's vocal line at measure ninety-one changes rhythm to triplets while maintaining the active, unique chromatic writing previously established. This rhythmic shift might suggest that the snake is slithering differently as he has now been made uncomfortable. As the Snake recovers from the Prince's questioning, he tempts and taunts the Prince. Portman again seems to use music as an agent of dramatic change for this taunting. The snake returns to more square rhythms which include more eighth notes and quarter notes than dotted rhythms and triplets. The Snake's phrase, "...In a place of grit and granite. Don't you miss your tiny planet? Aren't you lonely where you are?"¹⁰³ is almost exclusively half, quarter, and eighth notes. Then, as the Snake begins to tempt the Prince, Portman writes a melody which retains the original chromatic character and returns to strict, straight rhythms perhaps indicating the poise of the Snake.

The melody in which the Snake directly offers to help the Prince find his way home sees a return to the triplet rhythmic motif established when the Snake previously

¹⁰² Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 214. mm. 85-86.

¹⁰³ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 216-217. mm. 104-108.

tempted the Prince. This rhythmic return suggests to the audience all too clearly that the Snake's help is somehow disingenuous or deceptive. Upon the Prince's recognition of the Snake's mysterious, bad intentions, he asks a final question of the Snake, "Why do you talk in riddles?"¹⁰⁴ to which the Snake slithers his final words out in reply, "Because I solve them all."¹⁰⁵ Again, Portman writes transitional music to move from the Snake's exit to the narration of the Pilot beginning in measure 135. In the five measures of transition, the composer indicates four different tempos in addition to a *poco accelerando* and a *rallentando* found in measures 133 and 134 respectively. These specific and frequent tempo markings coincide with a tonality shift from F minor to C minor with a brief venture through the whole tone scale found in measure 134 seen in Figure 4.6. All of these musical elements packed into a short amount of time all point to Portman's plethora of experience and great skill in writing film scores with abrupt but effective transitions.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. pp. 219. mm. 127.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. pp. 219. mm. 128-129.

rall. **Meno mosso** ♩ = 66 *poco rall.*

130 *mp* Snake

mp *p* *Ped.*

The Snake goes.

Più mosso ♩ = 69 *poco accel.* ♩ = 80 *rall.*

133 *p* *mp* *mf* *quasi mf* *Ped.*

Più mosso ♩ = 100

135 *mf* Pilot

The Prince walked on— He climbed a moun-tain Earth was emp - ty

l.v. *mf* *Ped.*

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 130-132) features a vocal line for 'Snake' and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is 'Meno mosso' (♩ = 66) with a 'rall.' marking at the beginning and 'poco rall.' at the end. The piano part has a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with a 'Ped.' marking. The second system (measures 133-134) is titled 'The Snake goes.' and 'Più mosso' (♩ = 69, 'poco accel.'). It features a piano accompaniment with a 'Ped.' marking. The third system (measures 135-138) is titled 'Più mosso' (♩ = 100) and features a vocal line for 'Pilot' and a piano accompaniment. The piano part has a 'l.v.' marking and a 'Ped.' marking. The lyrics are 'The Prince walked on— He climbed a moun-tain Earth was emp - ty'.

Figure 4.6 Multiple tempo indications, tonality change and the whole tone scale.

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The transition to the next characters with whom the Prince interacts is only fourteen measures of recitative sung by the Pilot, again as narration. As the Prince leaves the Snake behind, next he encounters Roses, with whom an ascending five note scale with a raised fourth scale degree is associated. This motive appears for the first time in Act I when we are introduced to the Rose on the Prince's home planet. Initially, the ascending motive appears only once and in G major leading to D major, however, the Act II recurrence is in the key of A major and leads to E major. Further, the motive is augmented from sixteenth notes in Act I to eighth notes in Act II. Portman introduces the motive from the Prince's home planet only once, whereas in the second appearance of the motive, it is quite prevalent in the scene. For example, we find the five note ascending rose motive in measures 160-163, 176-179, 200-203, 216-219, then finally at the end of the scene in the orchestra in measures 240 and 244. As the motive is sung by multiple voices in Act II, each Rose has a slight variation of the motive. The first iteration of the motive is ascending eighth notes, a *staccato* quarter note, followed by a long rhythmic value with a *fermata*. The second iteration is similar to the first. Its rhythm is ascending eighth notes followed by a sustained note; here, the composer has removed the *staccato* quarter. The third iteration is the most developed as it is comprised of three quarter notes which are an arpeggio of the A major harmony supporting the orchestra's motive. In examining this scene, we again find that Portman associates unique music with a character or group of characters, and continues to write cinematic transitions.

As the score continues, the audience is treated to its first dramatic and musical transition contrasting the prior recitative-like transitions. Hunters are introduced after the Pilot's explanation of the Prince's reaction to the Roses he meets. The Hunters are an all male ensemble who take the stage and do simply as their title suggests, hunt. Further, their number is a simple two strophe composition with a short coda at the end serving as their exit music in measure 240 where Portman indicates,¹⁰⁶ *They run off*, during which time the hunters still sing. The Hunters' number further serves to introduce the next character, the Fox. This is the first time in the score that Portman musically introduces a character with a significant amount of musical substance rather than the quick transitions previously noted. The Hunters spend their entire scene searching for a fox. One measure after their vocal lines end, the audience is introduced to the Fox. While it may seem drastic for this composer to use an entire number to introduce a character given her prior penchant for virtually instantaneous shifts from one planet to another, one character to another, and one mood to another, she actually continues the musical precedent she has set for herself. Measures 348 and 349 reveal clear evidence of Portman's cinematic style in her movement from one scene to the next by employing the trusty tools of a drastic tempo change and motivic change unified by their C minor tonalities. This movement from the Hunters' scene to that of the Fox, which takes place over the barline from measure 348 to 349, is another example of Portman's musical transitions in *The Little Prince* which parallel film music. In contrast to the musical continuity exhibited by Portman, the librettist, Nicholas Wright, has allowed the Fox to be introduced by the Hunters clearly moving away from the jilted first act dramatic transitions.

¹⁰⁶ Rachel Portman. *The Little Prince*. Special Order Edition. pp. 250-251. mm. 341-348. These measures comprise the coda at the end of the Hunters' scene.

The Fox's music perhaps reveals yet another musical characterization. At the scene's musically hasty beginning, the orchestra forges into disjunct phrases which could represent the playfulness and edge of the Fox's character. This interpretation is furthered when the Fox begins to sing. Her vocal line picks up on the angular and disjunct nature of the orchestral music which begins the scene, favoring the intervals of a major ninth, a minor seventh, and octaves. Though other intervals occur in the Fox's vocal line, the aforementioned intervals permeate the Fox's melodies and may be indicative of the composer's characterization. As a dramatic device, the aesthetic of the Fox's music changes altogether upon her discussion of what it means to tame a wild animal such as herself. This musical change is clear, moving from extremely disjunct intervals to smoothly flowing lines whose intervallic content consists of much more "tame" seconds, thirds, fourths and fifths. Again, this intervallic content is not exclusive, but significant enough to create a clear difference in aesthetic which may be dramatically motivated. The end of the Fox's scene is yet another example of the influence of film music in Portman's writing. The scene ends in B flat minor with an open fifth perhaps representing the Fox's invitation to allow the Prince to tame her. As the score indicates, the Prince gradually tames her. For this taming, Portman has written a kind of film score similar to that of the sunset music.

The orchestral interlude accompanying the Prince's attempt to tame the Fox begins in C minor, a whole step up from the end of the previous scene. This change is quite unusual in the score as many of the scenes are linked through closely related keys

while other musical elements such as rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and orchestration change fairly immediately. In this instance though, there is a more distantly related tonality change, a tempo change, and significant changes in musical content all at once leading to one of the hastiest transitions in the score. There is nothing holding these two scenes together except the action on stage for which the composer can take no credit. This kind of transition is very cinematic in that the music, perhaps at the expense of its own independent continuity, represents the drama in real time. What makes this transition work is the chords Portman chooses to begin the taming music. Starting at measure 501 the harmonic rhythm is generally two harmonies per measure where the key of C minor is implicit but not explicit as the third is missing. In the first half of measure 501, both tonality and harmony are vague as an open fifth sounds, then the harmony moves to F minor in the second half of measure 501 moving the listeners' ear towards the key of C minor. The implied C minor causes a gentle drifting away from the previous B flat minor by giving the perception of a raised sixth scale degree (G natural). Then, the F minor harmony implies nothing more than a minor five chord in the previous key. Though Portman's musical changes are both significant and immediate in arriving at the taming music, her compositional skill is seen in the way she pastes B flat minor and C minor together seamlessly.

The harmonic language which begins the taming music remains largely unchanged until measure 512 where Portman begins truly exploring the C minor key in which she sets the fox scene. As the composer enriches the harmonic language in this scene, she continues the basic and simple rhythmic drive of the taming music which

seems to symbolizes the primal, physical dance a human might have with a wild animal he or she were trying to tame. Measure 542 sets up an interesting instability. The pitches C, A flat, and D give the listener a tritone and a minor seventh, both of which have strong harmonic implications and need to resolve. Portman spends two measures leading the listeners' ear to a resolution in C major at measure 544. Most likely indicating that the Fox is now tame, the harmonic language for the next ten measures oscillates between C major, F major, C minor, and B flat major, which eventually settles back into C minor at measure 552 though vaguely so as the E flat is often omitted from chords. After Portman seems to indicate through the music that the Prince has indeed tamed the Fox, the two share a conversation in which the Fox provides some insight about what makes the Prince's Rose special (about which the Prince has previously been confused and upset). Through abrupt musical changes, vague harmonic language, and moments of resolution, the composer has used her richly cinematic compositional tools to parallel the drama of the story which, when synchronized with the resolution in the text, proves very effective.

As the opera moves towards an end, the Prince learns from the Fox to trust his heart rather than his eyes. All of the issues the Pilot and Prince are facing come to a head and are resolved. They find water to drink in the desert, the Prince's curiosity about Earth has been quenched, and he finds a way to return home to the things he has come to love and appreciate more deeply due to the education received on his travels. In another traditional ensemble finale, Portman writes uplifting music using an existential, powerful, and positive text in cinematic scope.

In the firmly established, award-winning film scoring career Rachel Portman is making for herself, her 2003 opera, *The Little Prince*, is a gem of a modern opera in many regards. On a simplistic level related to perception, the source material and musical accessibility make the show widely appealing and fulfilling for the audience. On a more intellectual level, Portman's incorporation of many historically successful film scoring techniques juxtaposed with a strict numbers opera, as well as the orchestral paintings, musical symbolism, and wide variety of musical material make this opera a keen example of cinemopera, intertextuality, and the way modern opera is innovative from within a traditional context. For Portman to maintain completely tonal harmonic language throughout, and to have chosen a French children's novel as source material keeps this score a very traditional opera. Further, her incorporation of children's chorus, use of a boy soprano as a title character, and choice of source material all establish intertext in this opera. Moreover, the incorporation of the many cinematic tools on which Rachel Portman relies, which are herein examined, make *The Little Prince* a shining and accessible example of opera in the modern culture of film represented in the term cinemopera.

CHAPTER 5:

Conclusion:

Art changes through time. Its beauty, aesthetic qualities and ideals, goals, message, and purpose all change through time on multiple levels, in that singular works change from conception to fruition and artistic style and techniques evolve over time. While citing causality for such artistic change would be far too large in scope (and somewhat speculative), the certainty of change remains. In the operatic world, one of the most significant changes of the twenty-first century is the inclusion of and shift to film as source material. Logically, when popular media and entertainment changed from the written word either in the form of plays, novels, or poetry to those of film and television, the relationship between opera and popular culture has morphed accordingly. Links between opera and film emerge as some modern operas are based on movies, and prominent film composers are writing operas. These major interactions between popular and classical art present a very strong preservation of the relationship of opera and popular entertainment. So many *Kenner* shuffle off for a night at the opera and enjoy the high art of Mozart, Puccini, Verdi, and others forgetting that many of the operas in the standard repertoire are either or both intertextual references to what came before them, or are directly linked to the popular form of entertainment from their respective times. Modern opera goers may scoff at the thought of an opera based on Disney films, Children's books, the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *Star Wars*, or any other movie, but so many of the operas from the standard repertoire they cherish are little different in their relationship to their respective popular cultures.

By examining the movement in twenty-first-century opera of merging with the film industry, it becomes clear that regardless of musical style, the substance of opera maintains its link to popular culture and by way of that relationship, remains focused on contemporary socio-economic and political issues. In so doing, contemporary operas in the works today move further in the direction of cinemopera. André Previn, for example, is working on an opera based on the movie, *Brief Encounter*.¹⁰⁷ Paul Ruders explains his blending of film and opera saying, “After seeing Lars von Trier’s crushingly sad film *Dancer in the Dark*, I staggered from the cinema, clobbered by the emotional impact. ‘This is the ultimate operatic subject!’ I thought. Then, six years later, the Royal Danish Opera approached me about a third opera. I quickly “de-frosted” the *Dancer in the Dark* idea.”¹⁰⁸ In contrast, Ruders, after having been asked if he was planning another opera based on a film, states, “Only if it hit me out of the blue, as happened with *Dancer in the Dark*. I’d never go chasing the subject. The story must always find the composer. Think of *Tosca*, *Salome*, *Wozzeck* ... three plays that pole-axed Puccini, Strauss and Berg. And what operas!”¹⁰⁹ Yet another example of film and opera merging lies in Daniel Catán’s opera in the works which is based on the film *Il Postino*. Catán states, “I identified immediately with *Il Postino*. The film’s theme, the role that art plays in giving meaning to our lives, recurs in my work. Parallel to this was another strand: the relationship between an older, famous artist like the exiled Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (one of my

¹⁰⁷ Schirmer, G. (Accessed 5 June, 2010), <http://www.schirmer.com/Default.aspx?tabId=2570&ContentId_3182=255&CurrentPage_3182=1&State_3182=3&oldstate_3182=2&oldTabId_3182=2566&Anchor_3182=features> Schirmer’s site features an interview with Previn in which he explains this work in progress.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

favourite poets) and the aspiring young islander, Mario.”¹¹⁰ Catán’s statement clearly reflects both the idea of cinemopera and the intertextuality often found therein. Still another kind of link to film exists in the project opera *Atonement*. The 2007 film *Atonement* is based on a 2001 novel of the same name, and is now being adapted as an opera which is scheduled to premiere in 2013.¹¹¹ As the 2007 film won Best Original Score, Nockin subtly suggests in her advertisement for the operatic adaptation of *Atonement* that the film and the opera may share common musical ideas. Michael Berkley is writing the opera’s score whereas Dario Marinelli is responsible for the film score which includes Claude Debussy’s *Claire de lune* as well as an excerpt from Giacomo Puccini’s *La Boheme*.¹¹² One thing is certain, because film reaches such a widespread audience; it is rapidly becoming a popular source for operatic adaptations.

Additionally, other associations between contemporary classical music and film are emerging. Multi-media works such as Michael Gandolfi’s string quartet, *As Above*, exemplifies this trend. The film *Waterbugs* is projected onto a screen without sound as the quartet plays through Gandolfi’s score. Gandolfi admits that the score is not intended to be a film score, but rather combined with the visual element of *Waterbugs* to create a new piece which is neither solely his score, *As Above*, nor solely the film, *Waterbugs*.¹¹³ Further representative of the intertextuality discussed herein is the obvious reference in the title of Gandolfi’s piece to the mystic concept of, “as above, so below.”

¹¹⁰ Schirmer, G. (Accessed 5 June, 2010), <http://www.schirmer.com/Default.aspx?tabId=2570&ContentId_3182=255&CurrentPage_3182=1&State_3182=3&oldstate_3182=2&oldTabId_3182=2566&Anchor_3182=features>

¹¹¹ Maria Nockin. “It’s a Book! It’s a Movie! And It’s Now an Opera!” *Classical Singer*. June 2010. Nockin suggests that the opera adaptation of *Atonement* will be a large-scale production to capture the scope of the film as well as the award winning score.

¹¹² The Internet Movie Database. (Accessed 12 June, 2010), <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0783233>>

¹¹³ Michael Gandolfi. (Accessed 21 July 2010), <<http://www.michaelgandolfi.com/>>

Based on analysis of the three operas examined herein, reference to the continuing trend of operas based on films, and the preponderance of historical evidence of opera relating to popular culture, it becomes clear that the relationship between classical and popular culture is well wrought in twenty-first-century opera. While the specific trend of cinemopera may or may not last, certainly the combination of popular and classical idioms will. This prediction is based on historical evidence, contemporary happenings which exemplify the same principal, and the expectation that this trend spanning centuries will continue. Cinemopera, while perhaps a finite subcategory, is no less trendy than *verismo* opera, or French Grande Opera. Time will tell whether cinemopera persists or fades. Regardless of its future, it is alive and well in the present.

Coda: Other Trends in Modern Opera, its Links to Film and how the Business is Changing Due to the Big Screen

While a certain body of the modern operatic repertoire is related to film, either in the form of its composer, its source material, or in some other way, there is yet another (and more obvious) connection between opera and film. With the release of both live performances and movie-like productions of operas on DVD, and the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts of select performances from each season onto the big screen in theatres around the world, opera is more accessible to audiences with greater frequency and in greater visual detail. Seeing a “Met broadcast” is like having the best seats in the house. Thus, the visual aspect of broadcast productions is of greater significance than those remaining limited to live, in-house shows. Singers hired for these broadcast and DVD productions must be believable and visually appealing, much like Hollywood movie actors and actresses. The necessity for this type of appeal leads opera companies to consider visual appearance in casting decisions whereas prior to the abundance of operas on DVD and the Met broadcasts, a singer’s appearance was less significant given that in an opera house, a small percentage of the audience sees the performers close up. However, with the addition of DVD performances available in one’s home as well as the ability to watch live performances from the Metropolitan Opera in select movie theaters, opera singers are required to be more physically fit and to be an appropriate physical type for the role for which they are being considered since they may indeed have a close up shot.

It will be interesting to see whether the increasing importance of a singer’s appearance leads to a higher priority being placed on appearance than voice type.

Traditionally, if a voice is the wrong *fach* for a role, they would seldom if ever be considered. Now that performances are recorded to be broadcast or transferred to DVD, many shows are electronically amplified since the sounds must be picked up on a microphone. What may change is how heavily productions rely on those microphones. If, say, two sopranos audition for the role of Salome, and one is fit, attractive, and alluring but has a voice traditionally thought of as too light for the role, and the other is overweight and less attractive with a voice more traditionally thought of as a Salome, which will be cast? A company could cast the wrong voice with the right appearance and argue that because the singing will be electronically amplified, it is less important to have the right sized voice. Rather, the wrong voice can be amplified if the singer looks the part. Will companies begin to cast out of *fach* to find the ideal appearance in a role, or will they maintain the integrity of the *fach* system and cast appropriate voices whose appearances may be acceptable but not ideal? Only time will tell whether a singer's voice or appearance will be prioritized in future casting decisions.

Moreover, it would be irresponsible to lead the reader to believe that modern operas are all linked to film in the ways that the operas discussed in this document are. There are in fact a great number of modern operas which maintain the tradition of the written word, history, and mythology for source material such as William Bolcom's *A View From the Bridge*, which is based on the Arthur Miller play by the same name. In contrast, Bolcom has written an opera, *A Wedding*, which is based on a film by the same name by Robert Altman and John Considine. John Adams' *Nixon in China*, Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and Richard Danielpour's *Margaret Garner* are

wonderful examples of modern opera rooted in history, and in the case of *Margaret Garner*, a novel by Toni Morrison as well. These list only a small representation. Time will tell whether or not the trend of cinemopera remains. Regardless, one can learn from this current movement in the operatic world: The visual aspect of opera is growing increasingly more important, and plays a critical role in production value, casting, and creative process, and the growing significance of the visual element in opera is changing the repertoire.

Appendix 1: Set Theory Analysis in Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*

The First Emperor
Act I, Scene 1

7

62

Mast. *Ge wu bo bi (slap your sides as you sing.)*

S A *mp* *slapping thighs: Wu*

T B *mp* *slapping thighs: Wu*

f sf *PPP* *tr* *tr^b* *tr^b* *tr^b*

66

S A *p* *fff* *sf* *Wu*

T B *p* *fff* *sf* *Wu*

tr *tr^b* *tr^b* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr* *tr^b* *tr^b* *fff* *sf* *tr* *tr^b*

(Revised 9/1/07)

Analysis of vocal lines, measure sixty-four beat four through measure sixty-eight beat four:

- First three notes of chorus melody (mm. 64, 4 – mm. 65, 4): B – F – C = E, 5, 0
- Normal order = E05
 - Prime form = 016
 - Set class 3-5

Next three notes of chorus melody (mm. 66, 1 – mm. 67, 3): $F\# - A - C = 6, 9, 0$

- Normal order = 690

- Prime form = 036

- Set class 3-10

Final three notes of chorus melody (mm. 67, 3 – mm. 68, 4): $D\# - E - F\# = 3, 4, 6$

- Normal order = 346

- Prime form = 013

- Set class 3-2

Entire chorus melody (mm. 64, 4 – mm. 67, 4):

$B - F - C - F\# - A - D\# - E = 11, 0, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9$

- Normal order = 34569E0

- Prime form = 0123679

- Set class 7-19

The First Emperor
Act I, Scene 1

8 *senza misura*
70 *mf* (slow and free) (4-27)

Mast. Zheng Qin sheng shi (O here is the true sound of Qin) Ha... Wan wu ho shi (that brings harmony to everything!)
(with overtones) *fff*

S A (u - a - e - i - o - u etc...) *fff*
(with overtones)

T B (u - a - e - i - o - u etc...)

vc., cb. *gub*

71 [YIN-YANG MASTER dances with other dancers in a ritualistic style.]

Mast. *ppp*

S A *p* *f*

T B *p* *f*

zheng *mp* *mf* *f* *p* *fff* *p* *sf* *sf*

(8) *Red. sempre*

72 *p*

T B (improvising)

harp *f*

Ceramic inst. *mf dolce* (4-27)

(Revised 2/15/08)

Analysis of Yin-Yang Master's melody, measures seventy through seventy-one:

F – Ab – Eb – Db – G – Bb = 5, 8, 3, 1, 7, T

- Normal order = 13578T

- Prime form = 023579

- Set class 6-33

Fragments of Yin-Yang Master's melody (mm. 70, 1 – mm. 70, 4):

F – Ab – Eb = 5,8,3

- Normal order = 358

- Prime form = 025

- Set class 3-7

Yin-Yang Master's melody (mm. 70, 6 – mm. 70, 13):

Db – G – F – Bb = 1,7,5,T

- Normal order = 57T1

- Prime form = 0258

- Set class 4-27 (excluding pitch class 5 since it has already been sung, makes this portion of the melody set class 3-10- same set class as one of the previously established chorus set class).

Analysis of zheng line, measure seventy-one:

F – B – A – D3 – E – Gb = 5, E, 9, 3, 4, 6

- Normal order = 34569E

- Prime form = 012368

-Set class 6-Z41

Analysis of Tibetan waterbowl line measure seventy-two:

F – A – B – Eb = 6, 9, E, 3

- Normal order = 369E

- Prime form = 0258

- Set class 4-27

The First Emperor
Act I, Scene 1

4-229 9

74 YIN-YANG MASTER: **TACET** *mf* 3-8

Mast. Kuang tei lei tei chi tei tei Kuang Ha wu

8va

Da tempo

77 [YIN-YANG MASTER cues the ceramic instruments.] *mf*

Mast. Kuang tei lei tei chi tei tei Kuang Ha wu Kuang tei lei tei chi tei tei

8va

fff *mp* *fff*

str. (pizz.)

80

Mast. Kuang Ha wu

S A *fff* Ha wu

T B *fff* Ha wu

8va *mp* *fff* *p*

(Revised 9/1/07)

Analysis of Yin-Yang Master's melody, measures seventy-five through eighty:

Yin-Yang Master's melody measures seventy-five and seventy-six:

F – B – G – E = 5, E, 7, 4

- Normal order = 457E

- Prime form = 0137

- Set class 4-Z29 (Interval vector 111111)

Yin-Yang Master's melody trichord fragment, measure seventy-five:

F – B – G = 5, E, 7

- Normal order = 57E

- Prime form = 026

- Set class 3-8

Measures seventy-five and seventy-six repeat twice in the next four measures, repeating the use of these set classes.

The First Emperor
Act I, Scene 1

11

93

Sh. *fff* 3-10
Come!

97

Sh. *fff*
Come!

S A *fff* Ha wu

T B *fff* Come! Ha wu

VI--

102

Sh. *fff* Come, spi-rits of awe-some pow-er.
fl. cl.

--DE 4-215

fff *f* *ff* *fff* *mf* *fff* *PPP* *sf*

(Revised 4/10/2008)

Analysis of Shaman's melody, measures ninety-six through 106:

Shaman's melody (mm. ninety-six through ninety-seven):

B – F – Ab = E, 5, 8

- Normal order = 58E

- Prime form = 036

- Set class 3-10 (same set class as one of the previously established chorus set classes)

Shaman's melody (mm. 104-106):

B – F – F# – A = E, 5, 6, 9

- Normal order =

- Prime form =

- Set class 4-Z15 (shares interval vector 111111 with 4-Z29 of Master's melody previously analyzed.

111 (long) *mf* 5-19 *f* 6-30

Sh. who live in the high moun-tain and de-cide our for - tunes.

(long)

fff *p* *mp* *mf* *p*

vc.

Sh. *ff* 7-19 *f*

Send us your light so we can see

S *mf*

A so we

T *mf*

B so we

ppp *mf* *sf* *ppp*

(Revised 9/1/07)

Analysis of Shaman's melody, measures 112-122):

Shaman's melody measures 112-113:

B – F – C – F# – A = E, 5, 0, 6, 9

- Normal order = 569E0

- Prime form = 01367

- Set class 5-19

Shaman's melody measures 114-116:

B – F – C – F# – A – Eb = E, 5, 0, 6, 9, 3 (same as previous 2 measures with added Eb)

- Normal order = 3569E0

- Prime form = 013679

- Set class 6-30

Shaman's melody measures 117-122:

B – F – C – F# – A – Eb – E = E, 5, 0, 6, 9, 3, 4

- Normal order = 34569E0

- Prime form = 0123679

- Set class 7-19 (same set class as chorus melody mm. 64-67).

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257 Park Avenue South

New York, NY 10010

United States of America

Telephone: +1 212.254.2100

Fax: +1 212.254.2013

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Chuck Chandler, MM, SVS Clinical Fellow
Assistant Professor of Voice
Shorter University
School of the Fine and Performing Arts
315 Shorter Ave.
Rome, GA 30165

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Shorler University
School of the Fine and Performing Arts
315 Shorler Avenue
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- The Little Prince*. DVD. Directed by Francesca Zambello. Produced by Houston Grand Opera. New York, NY: Sony Classical, 2004.

VITA: Yuell (Chuck) Chandler, tenor

Education

2005-2012	University of Kentucky	DMA vocal performance Gail Robinson
Emphasis: Song Cycle literature, Operatic literature based on or related to film. Dissertation: <i>Opera and the Modern Culture of Film: The Genesis of "Cinemopera;" its Intertextuality and Expansion of Operatic Source Material</i>		
2002-2005	University of Kentucky	MM vocal performance Dr. Everett McCorvey
1997-2002	Florida State University	BM vocal performance Dr. Jerrold Pope

Certifications & Continuing Education

Levels I & II Singing Voice Specialist (SVS) and clinical fellow working with injured voices-
SVS certification with Dr. Karen Wicklund, Chicago Center for Professional Voice

Performing Experience: Concert

2011	Obadiah	Mendelssohn's <i>Elijah</i>	Seneca, SC
2010	tenor soloist	Mozart's <i>Coronation Mass</i>	Three Rivers Singers
		Handel's <i>Messiah</i>	Chorale II, Atlanta, GA
2009	tenor soloist	Handel's <i>Messiah</i>	Rome Symphony Orchestra
		DuBois <i>Seven Last Words of Christ</i>	Spartanburg, SC
		John Stainer's <i>Crucifixion</i>	Seneca, SC
2008	tenor soloist	European tour	Cathedral of the Assumption choir
		Puccini's <i>Gloria</i>	Lexington, KY
		Rossini's <i>Stabat Mater</i>	Indiana University Southeast
		Lincoln Bicentennial	Louisville Philharmonic Orchestra
		Handel's <i>Messiah</i>	Seneca, SC
2006	tenor soloist	Bach Cantata # 61	Lexington, KY
		Saint-Saëns <i>Christmas Oratorio</i>	Lexington, KY
	Uriel	Haydn's <i>The Creation</i>	Lexington Community Chorus
2005	Obadiah	Mendelssohn's <i>Elijah</i>	Lexington, KY
2004	tenor soloist	Mozart's <i>Coronation Mass</i>	Richmond Choral Society
2000	tenor soloist	Handel's <i>Messiah</i>	Bay Area Choral Society
		Early music concert	Tallahassee Bach Parley

Performing Experience: Opera

2010	King Kaspar	<i>Amahl and the Night Visitors</i>	Seven Hills Opera
2009	Spamonti	<i>Toowhopera (world premiere)</i>	GMTA Commission
2008	Nanki-Poo	<i>The Mikado</i>	Converse Opera Theatre
	1 st Philistine	<i>Samson et Dalilah</i>	KY Opera
2007	King Kaspar	<i>Amahl and the Night Visitors</i>	KY Opera
	Emperor Altoum	<i>Turandot</i>	KY Opera
	1 st Commissioner	<i>Dialogues of the Carmelites</i>	KY Opera
	Father Confessor (cover)	<i>Dialogues of the Carmelites</i>	KY Opera
	Messenger	<i>Il Trovatore</i>	KY Opera
	Tamino (cover)	<i>Die Zauberflöte</i>	Louisville Ballet
2006	Tamino	<i>The Magic Flute</i>	UK Opera Theatre
2005	Gherardo	<i>Gianni Schicchi</i>	UK Opera Theatre
	Larry/Matt	<i>The Face on the Barroom Floor</i>	UK Opera Theatre
	Goro	<i>Madama Butterfly</i>	UK Opera Theatre
	The Vain Man	<i>The Little Prince</i>	UK Opera Theatre
2004	Lucano, Famigliari, Tribuni	<i>L'Incoronazione di Poppea</i>	UK Opera Theatre
2003	Don Curzio	<i>Le Nozze di Figaro</i>	UK Opera Theatre

Performing Experience: Recitals

2011	<i>On Wenlock Edge</i>	Shorter University	Rome, GA
	Songs of Norman Matthews	Shorter University	Rome, GA
2010	Rossini, Mozart, Schumann	Converse College Guest Artist	Spartanburg, SC
2010	<i>Dichterliebe</i>	Shorter University	Rome, GA
2009	Handel, Duparc, Parry, et al.	First Presbyterian Church	Lexington, KY
	<i>The Time of Singing Has Come</i> (world premiere)	Shorter University	
2008	Die schöne Müllerin	First Presbyterian Church	Lexington, KY

Directors, Conductors, Masterclasses

Garnet Bruce, Patrick Diamond, Casey Stangl, Michael Ehrmann, Sally Stunkel, Margot Buchanan, James Rogers, Joseph Rescigno, Joseph Meckavich, Christopher Larkin, Robert Shaw, John Barill, Doug Fischer, Anthony Dean Griffey, John Wustman, Bo Skhovus, David Adams, Martin Katz, Michael Eliason,

Awards, Honors, Professional Affiliations, Teaching & Student Success

- Winner of the Vulacan Materials Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership Award 2010-2011 at Shorter University
- Winner of the Outstanding Efforts to Support First Year Students award 2009-2010 at Shorter University
- 2010 GANATS masterclass: of 6 students chosen from across the state, 2 were from my studio
- Member of National Association of Teachers of Singing
- Member of Music Teachers National Association
- Numerous student winners at state and regional NATS, 2010-present:
 - GA NATS 2010: 8 students entered, 7 were finalists/winners
 - SER NATS 2010: 7 students entered, 2 were overall winners
 - GA NATS 2011: 12 students entered, 10 were finalists/winners (more winners than any other teacher in the state).
 - SER NATS 2011: 11 students entered, 6 finalists/winners. (more winners than any other teacher in the Region who entered only undergraduate students; also, my sophomore men took 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in their category).
- Student winner of the William and MaryAnn Knight scholarship competition 2009-2010, finalists from my studio every year from 2009 to present
- Student winner of GA MTNA statewide voice competition 2011. (he advances to regionals in January).
- Students in summer programs: Sieur de Luth Opera Training Program, Brevard Music Center, UNF Opera Study Abroad
- Students accepted to graduate programs and offered teaching assistantships: NYU
- National finalists in the Orpheus National Vocal Competition
- National finalists in the Lexington Bach Competition

PART 2

Extended Monograph of Lecture Recital

Robert Schumann's *Dichterliebe*: Uniting Poetry and Music

DMA Lecture Recital

Music and literature have historically shared a connection. This connection was made between poetry and music by the Ancient Greeks. Plato's definition of music consisted of words, harmony, and rhythm. Similarly, Aristotle defined poetry as words, melody, and rhythm. So, by the Ancient Greek's standards, both music and poetry shared the same basic rudiments: Word, rhythm, and either melody or harmony. To the Ancient Greeks, these two art forms were intimately connected having little distinction between their definitions.¹¹⁴ Fast forward through time and note the emergence of Gregorian chant and early church music which led to the modern choral tradition, secular songs through different time periods like lute songs, the songs of the Meistersinger and Troubadors, the early English stage music by Henry Purcell and his contemporaries, and the genre of opera, art song, and musical theatre. Each of these different emergences shows a different facet of the way poetry and music have interacted through time, while keeping their relationship.

Though the way text and music relate changed through history, what remains is their relationship- that they are frequently paired together. Composers are still writing art songs and operas, pop songs, musical theatre, folk songs, and other manifestations of the combination of words and music. It is this gravity between literature and music that we

¹¹⁴ Douglass Seaton's text, *Ideas and Styles in the Western Musical Tradition*, states that Plato defined music as consisting of words, harmony, and rhythm, and Aristotle defined poetry as words, melody, and rhythm. It then goes on to say that Homer's epic poetry and the plays of Sophocles and Aeschylus were sung. Seaton text pg. 1.

will focus on today examining how poetry influences art song, and how art song gives us insight into the composer's interpretation of a poem's meaning. The mingling of literature and music in the form of German Lieder was at a very prolific state in the Romantic era (roughly the 1820's through 1900). The German Lieder tradition emerged from Haydn and Mozart's songs and was picked up by Schubert, Beethoven, Brahms, and Wolf. Robert Schumann also championed German Lieder and continued another significant German creation- the song cycle. In many regards, the song cycle provides particularly rich grounds for examining the relationship of literature and music in the 19th century either because a song cycle tells one story from start to finish, or because its poetry is connected in another way. Whether a song cycle is narrative like Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* which follows a young boy's journey through searching for work, falling in love which is unrequited, and as a result going insane and drowning himself in a stream, or whether the poetry of a song cycle is not narrative in a story telling sense, a cycle's poetry is often connected by theme or subject matter at the very least, and creates a larger musical palate to work with than one single art song. Robert Schumann's song cycle, *Dichterliebe*, shows a great deal of textual and musical unity, and a carefully crafted interaction between poetry and music.

Dichterliebe was composed in 1840 and is a musical exploration of the early poetry of Heinrich Heine(1797-1856). Most of Heine's poetry that has been set to music was written during the early stages of his career which also included journalism and literary criticism. The texts selected by Schumann for his cycle were mostly written 15-20 years before the cycle was composed (around 1820); so, by the time *Dichterliebe* was

written, it must have seemed like old news to Heine who had by this time moved to Paris in resistance to German censorship and conservatism. Many of Heine's later works were banned by German authorities due to their non-patriotic, liberal, and controversial slant. Heine's early verses still resounded for some, and comprise the majority of his texts which were set to music. Heine's extremely colorful life would make an entertaining presentation in and of itself, and likely served as good fuel for his poetry. Though his texts are known for being ironic and disillusioned, they often center on typical themes of German Romanticism- most notably, unrequited love. The songs in this cycle are all unified by this very theme. *Dichterliebe*, translated "The Poet's Love", is not one character's story as literally as Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* is, but it could be interpreted that way. With each poem centering on unrequited love, it is possible for the recitalists to portray one speaker with one lost love.

Throughout Schumann's career he was involved in both literature and music. His own writings including those published under pseudonyms in his periodical, *Die Neuezeitschrift für Musik*, show Schumann the composer of words. We know of Schumann that in some of his Lieder he made small changes to the original poetry to accommodate what he intended to communicate.¹¹⁵ In some cases, these textual changes were as small as a word or two, or as much as a phrase or sometimes even the repetition or exclusion of an entire stanza. By making these alterations, Schumann made his music a personal reflection of his own interpretation, and some scholars go so far as to say his

¹¹⁵ Alan Walker states in his book *Schumann: The Man and His Music*, "So he (Schumann) treats poetry as a means to an end. Thus it can be altered or repeated to make a small-scale musical form or grouped to make a larger one. It is selected to correspond with Schumann's own mood; hence the main choice in 1840 of Rückert or Heine and their sweet or bitter love poetry." on pg. 125.

music reflects his own circumstances at the time of composition. Accordingly, his music sometimes reflected his personal life with his wife, Clara. In May of 1840 when *Dichterliebe* was composed, The Schumanns had finally put their problems with Clara's father behind them and moved to Leipzig to make a fresh start. Once in Leipzig Robert began a composing frenzy during which *Dichterliebe* was composed. These sixteen songs were written in only a few short months. Alan Walker, in his book, *Schumann: The Man and His Music*, suggests that Schumann chose Heine's poetry due to the central theme of love, how it is communicated, and the connection he must have felt with the poetry just after he and Clara moved to Leipzig.¹¹⁶

Heinrich Heine is considered one of Germany's great romantic poets. What exactly the term romantic means leaves some room for interpretation, but if we consider the definition of romanticism as is commonly accepted in classic literature, we can come to understand and interpret Heine's poetry on a more profound level. Literary romanticism is typically characterized by themes of death especially by means of suicide, love- both requited and unrequited, life's journey, and religious topics, and often contains images of nature. Romantic poetry often relates nature and man, and uses that relationship to show some sort of teleology whether it be progression in time, life, or situation. If we examine the poetry of Heine's *Dichterliebe*, we find that it adheres to many of these romantic characteristics. For example the theme of love unifies the whole cycle. The poems contain romantic images such as flowers, bird images, and many references to nature, often conjuring such things as roses, lilies, doves, and nightingales. In the third poem of the cycle the first line lists, "Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube, die

¹¹⁶ A reference again to Walker's idea of why Schumann chose this poetry to set. pg. 125.

Sonne” (The rose, the lilly, the dove, the sun) and then goes on to explain that the speaker once loved these things, but now his love is one woman. In *Die alten, bösen Lieder* Heine raises the images of a coffin, burial, and religion in his reference to the cathedral on the Rhine to which he also refers in the poem *Im Rein im heiligen Strome*. Heine uses these romantic images to end the final poem of this cycle by associating his love and death in saying: “Do you know why the coffin is so large and heavy? I sank my love and my pain therein.” Heine juxtaposes death and love in this poignant final image which ends the cycle. By means of natural imagery and the themes commonly associated with literary romanticism inherent in Heine’s poetry it is clear that his vehicle for communication is steeped in the Romantic tradition.

Now let’s examine the cycle to see how Schumann and Heine’s work complement each other. Perhaps we’ll draw closer to determining if poetry and music are as similar as the Ancient Greeks thought. Schumann’s skill in composition stretched much further than art song. He was a prolific composer in many genre including piano music. His versatility makes his vocal music unique in that often the accompaniment serves as much more than the name of its function might imply. The accompaniments of Schumann’s songs frequently require a true, equal collaboration between pianist and singer. There are piano interludes that serve an almost narrative function and are certainly rife with emotional content derived from the text, some that serve as musical or dramatic transition, and some whose function it is to close the song. The central role of Schumann’s accompaniments can be seen throughout *Dichterliebe* from beginning to end. The opening song, *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai*, unfurls with a quaint, intimate piano interlude which, though

only four measures long, serves to create an atmosphere of beauty and anguish which gives the singer a world in which to live and speak. At the very least, the introduction to the first song creates a dramatic aesthetic by suspending a C-sharp over a D natural resolving to a B minor chord. The piece suggests an F-sharp minor tonality, though it never resolves there. *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai* has two verses separated by the same interlude with which the piece opens, and ends with the piano winding its way to the dominant C-sharp major chord as the melancholy of Schumann's music enhances the irony of the text. As the singer delivers text describing the beautiful month of May and how he revealed his feelings to his love, the minor mode of the piece and the suspensions Schumann writes likely imply sorrow, pain, and longing. The unresolved dominant chord ending the piece prepares the second song of the cycle which begins in the closely related key of A major. The singer begins the piece on a C-sharp, the third of the opening chord, creating a seamless transition which contributes to the cyclic nature of the music, and perhaps references Beethoven's *An die Ferngeliebte* which also displays a similar kind of musical confluence and key relationships as well as being cited as the first song cycle.

As *Dichterliebe* continues to its second song, *Aus meinen Tränen spriessen*, the text and harmonic language continue complementing each other. The text furthers the sentiment of the dual pain and love felt by the speaker. He explains that from his tears, come flowers, and his sighs become a nightingale's song. He addresses his love to tell her that when he feels her love, he will give her the flowers, and that the nightingale's song should sound at her window. So the tears become flowers which he gives his love, and

his sigh becomes the nightingale's song at her window. In much the same way that the text is unified, Schumann's music is also. Key relationships tie the first two pieces together. As we continue, the tonal scheme will hold true to this trend. The poetic unity between the two sentences is paralleled by a musical gesture. Schumann relies heavily on the I – IV – I progression in A-major. Each sentence moves from tonic to subdominant on the most important verbs they contain. As the second piece closes, it cadences simply in A-major which is the dominant of the next piece beginning in D-major.

The third song of the cycle is rhythmic, quick, and a pattery text setting. The poem reveals the excitement of the speaker for the first time as he lists off a number of images from nature which he loves. It begins with an authentic cadence begun by the singer whose first pitch, an A, comes directly out of the tonality of the previous song. He quickly ascends a perfect fourth to a D establishing the dominant to tonic relationship of the second and third pieces and expressing his excitement. The speaker rapidly and excitedly tells the audience all of the things he used to love, then explains that he now loves only one. To him, the woman he loves represents everything he formerly loved. For this brief but important poetic statement, Schumann writes an almost frantic broken-chord accompaniment with a steady composite rhythm of sixteenth notes throughout until the final cadence in eighth notes. In spite of its frantic text setting and accompaniment, tonally the piece does not modulate.

Wenn ich in deine Augen seh' the fourth piece of the cycle, begins on a G major chord whereas the previous piece has ended on a D-major chord. Once again, Schumann

links two pieces in the cycle together by having one piece end as a dominant to the next piece. The speaker's excitement settles and he tells his love that all is made right when he sees himself in her eyes, when he kisses her, and when he rests his head on her breast. But when she tells him she loves him, he weeps bitterly. This gives a clear sense of the irony for which Heine is known, and once again gives Schumann the opportunity to highlight this aspect of his poetry. Indeed, Schumann's spare accompaniment has a settled and stable quality as the speaker enumerates the positives. However, when the text turns ironic in tone, Schumann changes his writing from block chords which have accompanied the whole piece thus far, to an arpeggiated chord perhaps to represent the speaker's anguish and the irony of the text. This moment in the cycle is harmonically interesting as well. Schumann pairs a G-sharp diminished seventh chord with the word "sprichst" a form of the verb- to speak, then moves to an A-major chord, the dominant in D-major, but does so with a powerful appoggiatura which could serve the dramatic purpose of showing the speaker's pain when he says "ich liebe dich" or I love you. In a beautiful, yet painful postlude, and the longest so far, Schumann meanders between the tonic and subdominant, finally closing the fourth song with a gentle plagal cadence.

In the fifth song of the cycle, *Ich will meine Seele tauchen*, Schumann features a piano postlude for the last seven measures of the piece. The harmonic rhythm of the postlude is quick and colorful followed by another plagal cadence- this time in B-minor. The move from G-major in the previous song to B-minor in the fifth one represents the least closely related tonal shift thus far- that of the mediant. Appropriately, Schumann has taken the most dramatic text thus far furthest away from the tonal scheme. The speaker

explains that he wants to tear his soul, and both the tonal shift of the piece, and the rhythmic drive of the apreggiated accompaniment lend credence to the speaker's pain. Schumann uses the piano in *Ich will meine Seele tauchen* to drive the poetry. In the last stanza of the poem the speaker uses the image of the song of his loved one trembling and quivering as once did her kiss upon his lips. Then, after the singer sings these lines, the piano trembles harmonically. Its quick progressions calm to a more stable, repeated I-IV-I pattern which closes the song in a slightly longer postlude than in previous songs. Again, the final chord of this piece is closely related to the beginning of the next piece, and serves to link songs five and six together musically.

The solemn and introspective, *Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome*, whose poetry makes comparison of the poet's love to the Virgin Mary, begins with the singer's pick-up note on a E-natural. As the previous song cadenced in B minor, the subdominant relationship is again explored. Schumann employs the piano in a very stately accompaniment figure which could perhaps be a musical representation of the actual structure of the church the speaker describes in the poem. Its angular and rhythmic qualities are almost architectural.

Traveling from E-minor to C-major brings us to the next piece, *Ich grolle nicht*, via another mediant tonal relationship. One of the most famous songs of *Dichterliebe*, *Ich grolle nicht* is perhaps the angriest text in spite of its forgiving message found in the first sentence of the poem. Once again it is Schumann's music that brings this irony to life. The vitality of the accompaniment's rhythm along with the accent marks Schumann has carefully given provide a very angular, stately, and almost proud sound like that of a

scorned lover saying, “I’m doing fine without you” to the other. The final cadence of this piece is a simple I (over a dominant pedal) - V7 - I in C-major, but it is separated by eighth note rests and indicated at a strong forte dynamic. Though there are no articulation markings directly over the cadence, the rests give the cadence a great deal of force as one final statement.

Tonal relationships continue to unify the cycle as we move to song number eight, *Und wüssten’s die Blumen*, which takes us directly to the relative minor of the previous song- A-minor. Heine writes a strophic poem here where each strophe holds the speaker expressing how serious his pain is. It is so deep that the only one who truly knows it is the one who broke his heart. Ending with an A-minor arpeggiated flourish on the piano, Schumann drives his way forward with sixteenth-notes; and in so doing, anticipates the rhythm of the right hand in the next piece.

Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen, the next song in Schumann’s cycle has a flowing sixteenth-note melody in the right hand accompanied by a basic chordal figure in the left. If taken without the vocal line, the accompaniment could almost stand alone. As a reflection of the text, Schumann likely wrote the melody and accompaniment in the piano part as the wedding music described in the poetry. The accompaniment melody may represent the flute and trumpet whereas the left hand rhythms and the triple meter may represent the wedding dance and drum mentioned in the poem. That the accompaniment introduces these figures before they are explained in the poetry gives a great deal of equality to the pianist and singer which is necessary to perform this cycle. Closing with

the longest postlude yet, the nearly twenty-measures of continued wedding music come to a grinding halt as the last four bars of the song chromatically descend and rest on D-major.

The very next song, *Hör ich das Liedchen klingen*, is again introduced by the piano, and begins in the closely related key of G-minor. The simple, somber phrase that opens *Hör ich das Liedchen klingen* could be interpreted as expository. The previous song describes wedding music which could be the song to which the speaker reacts in this poem. The tone of the poem is dark and mournful. The speaker reminisces over the song his love once sang and expresses great anguish at its memory. The first four measures of piano accompaniment in this piece exhibit a clear G minor through the strong harmonic progression: i – V – VI – iv – V – i. The stark tonal setting provides a very bitter mood into which the singer enters. As the speaker explains the grief he feels at the remembrance of his love's song, Schumann writes an angular melody which seems somewhat ponderous, almost as though the speaker is exploring these feelings on the spot. The resulting spontaneity and melancholy are quite moving. Schumann yet again uses the piano to give finality to *Hör ich das Liedchen klingen* and transition into the next song in the last ten measures. The postlude uses minor harmonies and a few dissonances such as the G and C-sharp against the D and the A in measure twenty-six perhaps to capture the depth of sorrow in the poetry. *Hör ich das Liedchen klingen* closes on a G-minor chord which is related to the E-flat major opening of the next song by chromatic mediant relationship.

In *Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen*, Heine tells a story through a narrator's voice. The love triangle revealed in this poem is a generic one without specific characters, however, in context, it may be interpreted as a narrator telling the story of the other poem's speaker who feels the burn of lost love. This poem's sarcasm and jadedness are balanced by Schumann's most playful music thus far. In perhaps the only lighthearted moment in the cycle, Schumann's music carries Heine's story along until the final two measures which may serve as a musical "moral" paralleling the textual moral of the poem. The narrator tells his listeners that the love triangle is an old story that rings true still, and that when it happens it tears your heart in two. The stately, final E-flat major chords are a stark contrast to the lilting and rhythmic accompaniment pervading the rest of the piece. From this piece to the next, Schumann winds his way from E-flat major to B-flat major, again a closely related key. The twelfth song entitled *Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen* contains a postlude which uses more lush harmonic language than previous postludes. By writing a postlude with this character, Schumann increases its significance, and could be preparing for the emotional intensity of the next song where the significance of the piano continues.

Ich hab' im Traum geweinet, the thirteenth song in the cycle, is a musically unique text setting in relation to the rest of *Dichterliebe*. This is the only song of the cycle that begins with the singer's opening phrase completely unaccompanied. Schumann does continue the tonal relationships in that the previous piece ends in B-flat major, and the singer begins *Ich hab' im Traum geweinet* on a B-flat. The C-flat in the opening solo vocal line implies the key of E-flat minor, and indeed, the piano affirms this key in its

first entrance. Schumann has again moved to a closely related key. The poem has three stanzas, the first two of which Schumann sets with the text and piano parts completely separate. The singer delivers text with the piano only as an echo. This allows the singer great freedom, and creates intimacy between the poetry and music. Further, Schumann writes a great deal of silence in this piece. After most of the phrases in the first two verses, there are written out silences. I believe this silence reflects the text in several ways. Heine's poem expresses a dream the speaker had. He explains that he dreamt his love was dead, that she left him, and that she was good to him. After each of these three dreams, the speaker awakens in tears. Schumann may be using the silence in the song to represent the time we experience between a dream and when we awaken- that time when you're not sure what's real and what isn't, and when you may be only partially aware of what's going on around you. Whether this is the case or not, the silence in this piece is eerie. And, while the amount of music written for the piano in *Ich hab' im Traum geweinet* is minimal, it is significant. The piano's cadences and articulations are a major driving force in the piece, and help to more firmly establish what little sense of teleology there is. The third stanza of the poem is accompanied in a more traditional way with the piano and singer together which proves effective in increasing the song's intensity to drive towards the end. Finally, in another significant postlude, Schumann maintains the use of silence and minimal piano accompaniment by ending the piece with two cadences separated by almost two measures of rest each.

Moving to the next piece, Schumann disguises his tonal scheme by moving from the closing of *Ich hab' im Traum geweinet* in E-flat minor to the opening of *Allnchtlich*

im Traume in B major. The common tone of G-flat or F-sharp links the two together, and Schumann skillfully features the F-sharp by having many of the opening phrases of *Allnächtlich im Traume* end on it. Both this song and the previous one are dreams, but this one is quite different. Rather than the bitterness expressed by the speaker in the last song, the dream or dreams in this song are a more balanced mixture of happiness and pain. The melancholy vocal line expresses this beautifully throughout. When the speaker explains that he has forgotten his dreams, Schumann cadences in B-major and we move on to the penultimate song of the cycle, *Aus alten Märchen winkt es*.

Again Schumann employs the piano to set up this song in a lilting six-eight introduction. The singer is layered in seamlessly, and Heine again continues the theme of dreams and fantasy by writing a fairy tale dream far removed from the bitterness and pain of the speaker's unrequited love. There are distinct musical changes in the song likely written to express the different parts of the fairy tale. The song and poem shift significantly at the word "ach." My interpretation is that the speaker is no longer in his fairy tale at this point, but expresses his desire to go to the land without pain he describes. The fairy tale flees away like foam and Schumann prepares the final song by breaking up thematic material from *Aus alten Märchen winkt es*, perhaps to symbolize the fleeting nature of the fairy tale, but also to extend the poetry through the piano. Then the piece closes in E-major which is the relative major of C-sharp minor, the key in which Schumann sets the final piece.

In the very last song, *Die alten bösen Lieder*, Heine's poetry calls on the images of a coffin, the church in Cologne on the Rhein river, and a grave. Each of these images brings the Romantic characteristics of the poetry into fullness, and offers a kind of repose to the speaker who declaims that the coffin is so large and heavy because he has sunken his love and pain into it. Interpretively, it seems as if the speaker is finally letting go of his bitterness. Indeed, Schumann's final postlude is a beautiful release.

From *Dichterliebe*'s opening to its final chord, Schumann sets Heine's poetry using the singer and pianist as equals, and relating the poems together with a tonal scheme making it easy for the performers to move from one piece to the next without interruption, and easing the audience's ear through a tonal journey reflective of Heine's texts. Because of the thematic unity of the poetry, and the musical unity brought about by the tonal relationships from one piece to the next, this cycle truly displays a sense of organic unity.

The relationship of literature and music may be perceived as complex or simple. Whether you agree with the Ancient Greeks that music and language are the same, or if you think they are separate entities, they certainly share a common goal: communication. As Dr. Jerico Vasquez and I communicate with you today through the performance of Robert Schumann's song cycle, *Dichterliebe*, listen for the tonal relationships unifying the songs, the ways in which the piano and voice interact, and the beautiful, emotion-packed postludes Schumann writes. Try to decide if poetry and music are somehow separate or if they truly are one in the same.